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THE COMMENTARIES

OF

CÆSAR

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

A NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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CÆSAR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It may perhaps be fairly said that the Commentaries of Cæsar are the beginning of modern history. He wrote, indeed, nearly two thousand years ago; but he wrote, not of times then long past, but of things which were done under his own eyes, and of his own deeds. And he wrote of countries with which we are familiar, —of our Britain, for instance, which he twice invaded, of peoples not so far remote but that we can identify them with our neighbours and ourselves; and he so wrote as to make us feel that we are reading actual history, and not romance. The simplicity of the narratives which he has left is their chief characteristic, if not their greatest charm. We feel sure that the circumstances which he tells us did occur, and that they occurred very nearly as he tells them. He deals with those great movements in Europe from which have

sprung, and to which we can trace, the present political condition of the nations. Interested as the scholar, or the reader of general literature, may be in the great deeds of the heroes of Greece, and in the burning words of Greek orators, it is almost impossible for him to connect by any intimate and thoroughly-trusted link the fortunes of Athens, or Sparta, or Macedonia, with our own times and our own position. It is almost equally difficult to do so in regard to the events of Rome and the Roman power before the time of Cæsar. We cannot realise and bring home to ourselves the Punic Wars or the Social War, the Scipios and the Gracchi, or even the contest for power between Marius and Sulla, as we do the Gallic Wars and the invasion of Britain, by which the civilisation of Rome was first carried westwards, or the great civil wars,—the "Bellum Civile,"—by which was commenced a line of emperors continued almost down to our own days, and to which in some degree may be traced the origin and formation of almost every existing European nation. It is no doubt true that if we did but know the facts correctly, we could refer back every political and social condition of the present day to the remotest period of man's existence; but the interest fails us when the facts become doubtful, and when the mind begins to fear that history is mixed with romance. Herodotus is so mythic that what delight we have in his writings comes in a very slight degree from any desire on our part to form a continuous chain from the days of which he wrote down to our own. Between the marvels of Herodotus and the facts of Cæsar there is a great interval,

from which have come down to us the works of various noble historians; but with Cæsar it seems that that certainty commences which we would wish to regard as the distinguishing characteristic of modern history.

It must be remembered from the beginning that Cæsar wrote only of what he did or of what he caused to be done himself. At least he only so wrote in the two works of his which remain to us. We are told that he produced much besides his Commentaries,—among other works, a poem,—but the two Commentaries are all of his that we have. The former, in seven books, relates the facts of his seven first campaigns in Gaul for seven consecutive years; those campaigns in which he reduced the nations living between the Rhine, the Rhone, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, and the sea which we now call the British Channel.* The latter Commentary relates the circumstances of the civil war in which he contended for power against Pompey, his former colleague, with Crassus, in the first triumvirate, and established that empire to which Augustus succeeded after a second short-lived triumvirate between himself and Lepidus and Antony.

It is the object of this little volume to describe Cæsar's Commentaries for the aid of those who do not read Latin, and not to write Roman history; but it may be well to say something, in a few introductory lines, of the life and character of our author. We are all more or less familiar with the name of Julius Cæsar. In our early days we learned that he

* There is an eighth book, referring to an eighth and ninth campaign, but it is not the work of Cæsar.

was the first of those twelve Roman emperors with whose names it was thought right to burden our young memories; and we were taught to understand that when he began to reign there ceased to exist that form of republican government in which two consuls elected annually did in truth preside over the fortunes of the empire. There had first been seven kings,—whose names have also been made familiar to us,—then the consuls, and after them the twelve Cæsars, of whom the great Julius was the first. So much we all know of him; and we know, too, that he was killed in the Capitol by conspirators just as he was going to become emperor, although this latter scrap of knowledge seems to be paradoxically at variance with the former. In addition to this we know that he was a great commander and conqueror and writer, who did things and wrote of them in the "veni, vidi, vici" style—saying of himself, "I came, I saw, I conquered." We know that a great Roman army was intrusted to him, and that he used this army for the purpose of establishing his own power in Rome by taking a portion of it over the Rubicon, which little river separated the province which he had been appointed to govern from the actual Roman territory within which, as a military servant of the magistrates of the republic, he had no business to appear as a general at the head of his army. So much we know; and in the following very short memoir of the great commander and historian, no effort shall be made,—as has been so frequently and so painfully done for us in late years,—to upset the teachings of our youth, and to

prove that the old lessons were wrong. They were all fairly accurate, and shall now only be supplemented by a few further circumstances which were doubtless once learned by all school-boys and school-girls, but which some may perhaps have forgotten since those happy days.

Dean Merivale, in one of the early chapters of his admirable history of the Romans under the Empire, declares that Caius Julius Cæsar is the greatest name in history. He makes the claim without reserve, and attaches to it no restriction, or suggestion that such is simply his own opinion. Claims of this nature, made by writers on behalf of their pet-heroes, we are, all of us, generally inclined to dispute; but this claim, great as it is, can hardly be disputed. Dr Merivale does not say that Cæsar was the greatest man that ever lived. In measuring such supremacy, men take for themselves various standards. To satisfy the judgment of one, it is necessary that a poet should be selected; for another, a teacher of religion; for a third, some intellectual hero who has assisted in discovering the secrets of nature by the operations of his own brain; for a fourth, a ruler,—and so on. But the names of some of these cannot be said to be great in history. Homer, Luther, Galileo, and Charles V., are great names,—as are also Shakespeare, Knox, Queen Elizabeth, and Newton. Among these, the two rulers would probably be the least in general admiration. But no one can assert that the names of the poets, divines, and philosophers, are greater than theirs in history. The Dean means that of all men who have lived, and whose deeds are known

to us, Julius Cæsar did most to move the world; and we think that the Dean is right. Those whom we might, perhaps, compare with Cæsar, are Alexander, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Washington. In regard to the first two, we feel, when claims are made for them, that they are grounded on the performance of deeds only partially known to us. In the days of Alexander, history was still dark,—and it had become dark again in those of Charlemagne. What Cromwell did was confined to our own islands, and, though he was great for us, he does not loom as large before the eyes of mankind in general as does one who moved all Europe, present and future. If there be any fair antagonist to Cæsar in this claim, it is Napoleon. As a soldier he was equally great, and the area of his operations was as extended. But there is an old saying which tells us that no one can be sure of his fortune till the end shall have come; and Cæsar's death on the steps of the Capitol was more in accordance with our ideas of greatness than that of Napoleon at St Helena. We cannot, moreover, but feel that there were fewer drawbacks from greatness in the personal demeanour of the Roman "Imperator" and Dictator than in that of the French Emperor. For Julius Cæsar was never really emperor, in that sense in which we use the word, and in accordance with which his successor Augustus really became an emperor. As to Washington, we may perhaps allow that in moral attributes he was the greatest of all. To aid his country he dared all,—even a rebel's disgraceful death, had he not succeeded where success was most improba-

ble; and in all that he attempted he succeeded. His is the name that culminates among those of the men who made the United States a nation, and does so by the eager consent of all its people. And his work came altogether from patriotism,—with no alloy of personal ambition. But it cannot be said that the things he did were great as those which were done by Cæsar, or that he himself was as potent in the doing of them. He ventured everything with as grand a purpose as ever warmed the heart of man, and he was successful; but the things which he did were in themselves small in comparison with those effected by his less noble rival for fame. Mommsen, the German historian, describes Cæsar as a man too great for the scope of his intelligence and power of delineation. "The historian," he says, speaking of Cæsar, "when once in a thousand years he encounters the perfect, can only be silent regarding it." Napoleon also, in his life of Cæsar, paints his hero as perfect; but Napoleon when doing so is, in fact, claiming godlike perfection for that second Cæsar, his uncle. And the perfection which he claims is not that of which Mommsen speaks. The German intends to convey to us his conviction that Cæsar was perfect in human capacity and intelligence. Napoleon claims for him moral perfection. "We may be convinced," says the Emperor, "by the above facts, that during his first consulate, one only motive animated Cæsar,—namely, the public interest." We cannot, however, quite take the facts as the Emperor of the French gives them to us, nor can we share his conviction; but the common consent

of reading men will probably acknowledge that there is in history no name so great as that of Julius Cæsar,—of whose written works some account is intended to be given in the following chapters.

He was born just one hundred years before Christ, and came of an old noble Roman family, of which Julius and not Cæsar was the distinctive name. Whence came the name of Cæsar has been a matter of doubt and of legend. Some say that it arose from the thick hair of one of the Julian tribe; others that a certain scion of the family, like Macduff, "was from his mother's womb untimely ripped," for which derivations Latin words are found to be opportune. Again we are told that one of the family once kept an elephant,—and we are referred to some eastern language in which the word for elephant has a sound like Cæsar. Another legend also rose from Cæsar's name, which, in the Gallic language of those days,—very luckily for Cæsar,—sounded as though one should say, "Send him back." Cæsar's horse once ran away with him, and carried him over to the enemy. An insolent Gaul, who knew him, called out, "Cæsar, Cæsar!" and so the other Gauls, obeying the order supposed to be given, allowed the illustrious one to escape. It must be acknowledged, however, that the learned German who tells us this story expresses a contemptuous conviction that it cannot be true. Whatever may have produced the word, its significance, derived from the doings and writings of Caius Julius, has been very great. It has come to mean in various languages the holder of despotic power; and though it is said that, as a fact, the Russian title

Czar has no connection with the Roman word, so great is the prestige of the name, that in the minds of men the popular appellation of the Russian Emperor will always be connected with that of the line of the Roman Emperor.

Cæsar was the nephew by marriage of that Marius who, with alternations of bloody successes and seemingly irreparable ruin, had carried on a contest with Sulla for supreme power in the republic. Sulla in these struggles had represented the aristocrats and patricians,—what we perhaps may call the Conservative interest; while Marius, whose origin was low, who had been a common soldier, and, rising from the ranks, had become the darling of the army and of the people, may perhaps be regarded as one who would have called himself a Liberal, had any such term been known in those days. His liberality,—as has been the case with other political leaders since his time,—led him to personal power. He was seven times Consul, having secured his seventh election by atrocious barbarities and butcherings of his enemies in the city; and during this last consulship he died. The young Cæsar, though a patrician by birth, succeeded his uncle in the popular party, and seems from a very early age,—from his very boyhood,—to have looked forward to the power which he might win by playing his cards with discretion.

And very discreet he was,—self-confident to a wonderful degree, and patient also. It is to be presumed that most of our readers know how the Roman Republic fell, and the Roman Empire became established as the result of the civil wars which began with Marius

and ended with that "young Octavius" whom we better recognise as Augustus Cæsar. Julius Cæsar was the nephew by marriage of Marius, and Augustus was the great-nephew and heir of Julius. By means of conscriptions and murders, worse in their nature, though less probably in number, than those which disgraced the French Revolution, the power which Marius achieved almost without foresight, for which the great Cæsar strove from his youth upwards with constant foresight, was confirmed in the hands of Augustus, and bequeathed by him to the emperors. In looking back at the annals of the world, we shall generally find that despotic power has first grown out of popular movement against authority. It was so with our own Cromwell, has twice been so in the history of modern France, and certainly was so in the formation of the Roman Empire. In the great work of establishing that empire, it was the mind and hand and courage of Cæsar that brought about the result, whether it was for good or evil. And in looking at the lives of the three men—Marius, Cæsar, and Augustus, who followed each other, and all worked to the same end, the destruction of that oligarchy which was called a Republic in Rome—we find that the one was a man, while the others were beasts of prey. The cruelties of Marius as an old man, and of Augustus as a young one, were so astounding as, even at this distance, to horrify the reader, though he remembers that Christianity had not yet softened men's hearts. Marius, the old man, almost swam in the blood of his enemies, as also did his rival Sulla; but the young Octavius, he whom the gods favoured so

long as the almost divine* Augustus, cemented his throne with the blood of his friends. To complete the satisfaction of Lepidus and Antony, his comrades in the second triumvirate, he did not scruple to add to the list of those who were to die, the names of the nearest and dearest to him. Between these monsters of cruelty—between Marius and Sulla, who went before him, and Octavius and Antony who followed him—Cæsar has become famous for clemency. And yet the hair of the reader almost stands on end with horror as Cæsar recounts in page after page the stories of cities burned to the ground, and whole communities slaughtered in cold blood. Of the destruction of the women and children of an entire tribe, Cæsar will leave the unimpassioned record in one line. But this at least may be said of Cæsar, that he took no delight in slaughter. When it became in his sight expedient that a people should suffer, so that others might learn to yield and to obey, he could give the order apparently without an effort. And we hear of no regrets, or of any remorse which followed the execution of it. But bloodshed in itself was not sweet to him. He was a discreet, far-seeing man, and could do without a scruple what discretion and caution demanded of him.

And it may be said of Cæsar that he was in some sort guided in his life by sense of duty and love of country; as it may also be said of his great contemporaries, Pompey and Cicero. With those who went

* Cœlo tonantem credidimus Jovem
Regnare; præsens Divus habebitur
Augustus.

before him, Marius and Sulla, as also with those who followed him, Antony and Augustus, it does not seem that any such motives actuated them. Love of power and greed, hatred of their enemies and personal ambition, a feeling that they were urged on by their fates to seek for high place, and a resolve that it was better to kill than be killed, impelled them to their courses. These feelings were strong, too, with Cæsar, as they are strong to this day with statesmen and with generals; but mingled with them in Cæsar's breast there was a noble idea, that he would be true to the greatness of Rome, and that he would grasp at power in order that the Roman Empire might be well governed. Augustus, doubtless, ruled well; and to Julius Cæsar very little scope for ruling was allowed after his battling was done; but to Augustus no higher praise can be assigned than that he had the intelligence to see that the temporary wellbeing of the citizens of Rome was the best guarantee for his own security.

Early in life Cæsar lifted himself to high position, though he did so in the midst of dangers. It was the wonder of those around him that Sulla did not murder him when he was young,—crush him while he was yet, as it were, in his shell; but Sulla spared him, and he rose apace. We are told that he became priest of Jupiter at seventeen, and he was then already a married man. He early trained himself as a public orator, and amidst every danger espoused the popular cause in Rome. He served his country in the East,—in Bithynia, probably,—escaping, by doing so, the perils of a residence in the city. He became Quæstor and then

Ædile, assisted by all the Marian party, as that party would assist the rising man whom they regarded as their future leader. He attacked and was attacked, and was "indefatigable in harassing the aristocracy,"* who strove, but strove in vain, to crush him. Though young, and addicted to all the pleasures of youth,—a trifler, as Sulla once called him,—he omitted to learn nothing that was necessary for him to know as a chief of a great party and a leader of great armies. When he was thirty-seven he was made Pontifex Maximus, the official chief of the priesthood of Rome, the office greatest in honour of any in the city, although opposed by the whole weight of the aristocracy, and although Catulus was a candidate, who, of all that party, was the highest not only in renown but in virtue. He became Prætor the next year, though again he was opposed by all the influence of those who feared him. And, after his twelve months of office, he assumed the government of Spain,—the province allotted to him as Proprætor, in accordance with the usage of the Republic,—in the teeth of a decree of the Senate ordering him to remain in Rome. Here he gained his first great military success, first made himself known to his soldiery, and came back to Rome entitled to the honour of a triumph.

But there was still another step on the ladder of the State before he could assume the position which no doubt he already saw before him. He must be Consul before he could be the master of many legions, and in

* The words are taken from Dean Merivale's history.

order that he might sue in proper form for the consulship, it was necessary that he should abandon his Triumph. He could only triumph as holding the office of General of the Republic's forces, and as General or Imperator he could not enter the city. He abandoned the Triumph, sued for his office in the common fashion, and enabled the citizens to say that he preferred their service to his personal honours. At the age of forty-one he became Consul. It was during the struggle for the consulship that the triumvirate was formed, of which subsequent ages have heard so much, and of which Romans at the time heard probably so little. Pompey, who had been the political child of Sulla, and had been the hope of the patricians to whom he belonged, had returned to Rome after various victories which he had achieved as Proconsul in the East, had triumphed, —and had ventured to recline on his honours, disbanding his army and taking to himself the credit of subsiding into privacy. The times were too rough for such honest duty, and Pompey found himself for a while slighted by his party. Though he had thought himself able to abandon power, he could not bear the loss of it. It may be that he had conceived himself able to rule the city by his influence without the aid of his legions. Cæsar tempted him, and they two with Crassus, who was wanted for his wealth, formed the first triumvirate. By such pact among themselves they were to rule all Rome and all Rome's provinces; but doubtless, by resolves within himself of which no one knew, Cæsar intended even then to grasp the dominion of the whole in his own hands. During the

years that followed,—the years in which Cæsar was engaged in his Gallic wars,—Pompey remained at Rome, not indeed as Cæsar's friend—for that hollow friendship was brought to an end by the death of Julia, Cæsar's daughter, whom Pompey, though five years Cæsar's elder, had married—but in undecided rivalship to the active man who in foreign wars was preparing legions by which to win the Empire. Afterwards, when Cæsar, as we shall hear, had crossed the Rubicon, their enmity was declared. It was natural that they should be enemies. In middle life, Pompey, as we have seen, had married Cæsar's daughter, and Cæsar's second wife had been a Pompeia.* But when they were young, and each was anxious to attach himself to the politics of his own party, Pompey had married the daughter-in-law of Sulla, and Cæsar had married the daughter of Cinna, who had almost been joined with

* She was that wife who was false with Clodius, and whom Cæsar divorced, declaring that Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected. He would not keep the false wife; neither would he at that moment take part in the accusation against Clodius, who was of his party, and against whom such accusation backed by Cæsar would have been fatal. The intrusion of the demagogue into Cæsar's house in the pursuit of Cæsar's wife during the mysteries of the Bona Dea became the subject of a trial in Rome. The offence was terrible and was notorious. Clodius, who was hated and feared by the patricians, was a favourite with the popular party. The offender was at last brought to trial, and was acquitted by venal judges. A word spoken by the injured husband would have insured his condemnation, but that word Cæsar would not speak. His wife he could divorce, but he would not jeopardise his power with his own party by demanding the punishment of him who had debauched her.

Marius in leading the popular party. Such having been the connection they had made in their early lives, it was natural that Pompey and Cæsar should be enemies, and that the union of those two with any other third in a triumvirate should be but a hollow compromise, planned and carried out only that time might be gained.

Cæsar was now Consul, and from his consular chair laughed to scorn the Senate and the aristocratic colleague with whom he was joined,—Bibulus, of whom we shall again hear in the Commentary on the civil war. During his year of office he seems to have ruled almost supreme and almost alone. The Senate was forced to do his bidding, and Pompey, at any rate for this year, was his ally. We already know that to prætors and to consuls, after their year of office in the city, were confided the government of the great provinces of the Republic, and that these officers while so governing were called proprætors and proconsuls. After his prætorship Cæsar had gone for a year to southern Spain, the province which had been assigned to him, whence he came back triumphant,—but not to enjoy his Triumph. At the expiration of his consulship the joint provinces of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum were assigned to him, not for one year, but for five years; and to these was added Transalpine Gaul, by which grant dominion was given to him over all that country which we now know as Northern Italy, over Illyria to the east, and to the west across the Alps, over the Roman province already established in the south of France. This province, bounded on the north by Lake Leman and the Swiss mountains, ran

south to the Mediterranean, and to the west half across the great neck of land which joins Spain to the continent of Europe. This province of Transalpine Gaul was already Roman, and to Cæsar was intrusted the task of defending this, and of defending Rome itself, from the terrible valour of the Gauls. That he might do this it was necessary that he should collect his legions in that other Gaul which we now know as the north of Italy.

It does not seem that there was any preconceived idea that Cæsar should reduce all Gallia beneath the Roman yoke. Hitherto Rome had feared the Gauls, and had been subject to their inroads. The Gauls in former years had even made their way as invaders into the very city, and had been bought out with a ransom. They had spread themselves over Northern Italy, and hence, when Northern Italy was conquered by Roman arms, it became a province under the name of Cisalpine Gaul. Then, during the hundred years which preceded Cæsar's wars, a province was gradually founded and extended in the south of France, of which Marseilles was the kernel. Massilia had been a colony of Greek merchants, and was supported by the alliance of Rome. Whither such alliance leads is known to all readers of history. The Greek colony became a Roman town, and the Roman province stretched itself around the town. It was Cæsar's duty, as governor of Transalpine Gaul, to see that the poor province was not hurt by those ravaging Gauls. How he performed that duty he tells us in his first Commentary.

During the fourth year of his office, while Pompey

and Crassus, his colleagues in the then existing triumvirate, were consuls, his term of dominion over the three provinces was prolonged by the addition of five other years. But he did not see the end of the ten years in that scene of action. Julia, his daughter, had died, and his great rival was estranged from him. The Senate had clamoured for his recall, and Pompey, with doubtful words, had assented. A portion of his army was demanded from him, was sent by him into Italy in obedience to the Senate, and shortly afterwards was placed under the command of Pompey. Then Cæsar found that the Italian side of the Alps was the more convenient for his purposes, that the Hither or Cisalpine Gaul demanded his services, and that it would be well for him to be near the Rubicon. The second Commentary, in three books, 'De Bello Civili,' giving us his record of the civil war, tells us of his deeds and fortunes for the next two years,—the years B.C. 49 and 48. The continuation of his career as a general is related in three other Commentaries, not by his own hand, to which, as being beyond the scope of this volume, only short allusion will be made. Then came one year of power, full of glory, and, upon the whole, well used; and after that there came the end, of which the tale has been so often told, when he fell, stabbed by friend and foe, at the foot of Pompey's pillar in the Capitol.

It is only further necessary that a few words should be added as to the character of Cæsar's writings,—for it is of his writings rather than of his career that it is intended here to give some idea to those who have not

an opportunity of reading them. Cæsar's story can hardly be told in this little volume, for it is the history of the world as the world then was. The word which our author has chosen as a name for his work,—and which now has become so well known as connected with Cæsar, that he who uses it seems to speak of Cæsar, —means, in Cæsar's sense, a Memoir. Were it not for Cæsar, a "Commentary" would be taken to signify that which the critic had added, rather than the work which the author had first produced. Cæsar's "Commentaries" are memoirs written by himself, descriptive of his different campaigns, in which he treats of himself in the third person, and tells his story as it might have been told by some accompanying scribe or secretary. This being so, we are of course driven to inquire whether some accompanying scribe or secretary may not in truth have done the work. And there is doubtless one great argument which must be powerful with us all towards the adoption of such a surmise. The amount of work which Cæsar had on hand, not only in regard to his campaigns, but in the conduct of his political career, was so great as to have overtasked any brain without the addition of literary labour. Surely no man was ever so worked; for the doctrine of the division of labour did not prevail then in great affairs as it does now. Cæsar was not only a general; he was also an engineer, an astronomer, an orator, a poet, a high priest—to whom, as such, though himself, as we are told, a disbeliever in the gods of Olympus, the intricate and complicated system of Roman worship was a necessary knowledge. And he was a politician, of whom it may be said that, though

he was intimately acquainted with the ferocity of opposition, he knew nothing of its comparative leisure. We have had busy statesmen writing books, two prime ministers translating Homer, another writing novels, a fourth known as a historian, a dramatist, and a biographer. But they did not lead armies as well as the Houses of Parliament, and they were occasionally blessed by the opportunities of comparative political retirement which opposition affords. From the beginning of the Gallic war, Cæsar was fighting in person every year but one till he died. It was only by personal fighting that he could obtain success. The reader of the following pages will find that, with the solitary exception of the siege of Marseilles, nothing great was done for him in his absence. And he had to make his army as well as to lead it. Legion by legion, he had to collect it as he needed it, and to collect it by the force of his own character and of his own name. The abnormal plunder with which it was necessary that his soldiers should be allured to abnormal valour and toil had to be given as though from his own hand. For every detail of the soldiers' work he was responsible; and at the same time it was incumbent on him so to manipulate his Roman enemies at Rome,—and, harder still than that, his Roman friends,—that confusion and destruction should not fall upon him as a politician. Thus weighted, could he write his own Commentaries? There is reason to believe that there was collected by him, no doubt with the aid of his secretaries, a large body of notes which were known as the Ephemerides of Cæsar,—jottings down, as we may say, taken from day to day. Were

not the Commentaries which bear Cæsar's name composed from these notes by some learned and cunning secretary?

These notes have been the cause of much scholastic wrath to some of the editors and critics. One learned German, hotly arguing that Cæsar wrote no Ephemerides, does allow that somebody must have written down the measurements of the journeys, of the mountains, and of the rivers, the numbers also of the captives and of the slaves.* "Not even I," says he,—"not even do I believe that Cæsar was able to keep all these things simply in his memory." Then he goes on to assert that to the keeping of such notes any scribe was equal; and that it was improbable that Cæsar could have found time for the keeping of notes when absolutely in his tent. The indignation and enthusiasm are comic, but the reasoning seems to be good. The notes were probably collected under Cæsar's immediate eyes by his secretaries; but there is ample evidence that the Commentaries themselves are Cæsar's own work. They seem to have become known at once to the learned Romans of the day; and Cicero, who was probably the most learned, and certainly the best critic of the time, speaks of them without any doubt as to their authorship. It was at once known that the first seven books of the Gallic War were written by Cæsar, and that the eighth was not. This seems to be conclusive. But in addition to this, there is internal evidence. Cæsar writes in the third person, and is very careful to maintain that mode of

* Nipperdeius.

expression. But he is not so careful but that on three or four occasions he forgets himself, and speaks in the first person. No other writer, writing for Cæsar, would have done so. And there are certain trifles in the mode of telling the story, which must have been personal to the man. He writes of "young" Crassus, and "young" Brutus, as no scribe would have written; and he shows, first his own pride in obtaining a legion from Pompey's friendship, and then his unmeasured disgust when the Senate demand and obtain from him that legion and another one, and when Pompey uses them against himself, in a fashion which would go far to prove the authenticity of each Commentary, were any proof needed. But the assent of Cæsar's contemporaries suffices for this without other evidence.

And it seems that they were written as the wars were carried on, and that each was published at once. Had it not been so, we could not understand that Cæsar should have begun the second Commentary before he had finished the first. It seems that he was hindered by the urgency of the Civil War from writing what with him would have been the two last books of the Gallic War, and therefore put the completion of that work into the hands of his friend Hirtius, who wrote the memoir of the two years in one book. And Cæsar's mode of speaking of men who were at one time his friends and then his enemies, shows that his first Commentary was completed and out of hand before the other was written. Labienus, who in the Gallic War was Cæsar's most trusted lieutenant, went over to the other side and served under Pompey in the Civil War. He could not have failed

to allude in some way to the desertion of Labienus, in the first Commentary, had Labienus left him and joined Pompey while the first Commentary was still in his hands.

His style was at once recognised by the great literary critic of the day as being excellent for its intended purpose. Cæsar is manifestly not ambitious of literary distinction, but is very anxious to convey to his readers a narrative of his own doings, which shall be graphic, succinct, intelligible, and sufficiently well expressed to insure the attention of readers. Cicero, the great critic, thus speaks of the Commentaries; "Valde quidam, inquam, probandos; nudi enim sunt, recti, et venusti, omni ornatu orationis, tanquam veste, detracto." The passage is easily understood, but not perhaps very easily translated into English. "I pronounce them, indeed, to be very commendable, for they are simple, straightforward, agreeable, with all rhetorical ornament stripped from them, as a garment is stripped." This was written by Cicero while Cæsar was yet living, as the context shows. And Cicero does not mean to imply that Cæsar's writings are bald or uncouth: the word "venusti" is evidence of this. And again, speaking of Cæsar's language, Cicero says that Cæsar spoke with more finished choice of words than almost any other orator of the day. And if he so spoke, he certainly so wrote, for the great speeches of the Romans were all written compositions. Montaigne says of Cæsar: "I read this author with somewhat more reverence and respect than is usually allowed to human writings, one while considering him in his person, by his actions and miracu-

lous greatness, and another in the purity and inimitable polish of his language and style, wherein he not only excels all other historians, as Cicero confesses, but peradventure even Cicero himself." Cicero, however, confesses nothing of the kind, and Montaigne is so far wrong. Cæsar was a great favourite with Montaigne, who always speaks of his hero with glowing enthusiasm.

To us who love to make our language clear by the number of words used, and who in writing rarely give ourselves time for condensation, the closely-packed style of Cæsar is at first somewhat difficult of comprehension. It cannot be read otherwise than slowly till the reader's mind is trained by practice to Cæsarean expressions, and then not with rapidity. Three or four adjectives, or more probably participles, joined to substantives in a sentence, are continually intended to convey an amount of information for which, with us, three or four other distinct sentences would be used. It is almost impossible to give the meaning of Cæsar in English without using thrice as many words as he uses. The same may be said of many Latin writers,—perhaps of all; so great was the Roman tendency to condensation, and so great is ours to dilution. But with Cæsar, though every word means much, there are often many words in the same sentence, and the reader is soon compelled to acknowledge that skipping is out of the question, and that quick reading is undesirable.

That which will most strike the ordinary English reader in the narrative of Cæsar is the cruelty of the Romans,—cruelty of which Cæsar himself is guilty to

a frightful extent, and of which he never expresses horror. And yet among his contemporaries he achieved a character for clemency which he has retained to the present day. In describing the character of Cæsar, without reference to that of his contemporaries, it is impossible not to declare him to have been terribly cruel. From bloodthirstiness he slaughtered none; but neither from tenderness did he spare any. All was done from policy; and when policy seemed to him to demand blood, he could, without a scruple,—as far as we can judge, without a pang,—order the destruction of human beings, having no regard to number, sex, age, innocence, or helplessness. Our only excuse for him is that he was a Roman, and that Romans were indifferent to blood. Suicide was with them the common mode of avoiding otherwise inevitable misfortune, and it was natural that men who made light of their own lives should also make light of the lives of others. Of all those with whose names the reader will become acquainted in the following pages, hardly one or two died in their beds. Cæsar and Pompey, the two great ones, were murdered. Dumnorix, the Æduan, was killed by Cæsar's orders. Vercingetorix, the gallantest of the Gauls, was kept alive for years that his death might grace Cæsar's Triumph. Ariovistus, the German, escaped from Cæsar, but we hear soon after of his death, and that the Germans resented it. He doubtless was killed by a Roman weapon. What became of the hunted Ambiorix we do not know, but his brother king Cativolcus poisoned himself with the juice of yew-tree. Crassus, the partner of Cæsar and Pompey in the first triumvirate, was killed by

the Parthians. Young Crassus, the son, Cæsar's officer in Gaul, had himself killed by his own men that he might not fall into the hands of the Parthians, and his head was cut off and sent to his father. Labienus fell at Munda, in the last civil war in Spain. Quintus Cicero, Cæsar's lieutenant, and his greater brother, the orator, and his son, perished in the proscriptions of the second triumvirate. Titurius and Cotta were slaughtered with all their army by Ambiorix. Afranius was killed by Cæsar's soldiers after the last battle in Africa. Petreius was hacked to pieces in amicable contest by King Juba. Varro indeed lived to be an old man, and to write many books. Domitius, who defended Marseilles for Pompey, was killed in the flight after Pharsalia. Trebonius, who attacked Marseilles by land, was killed by a son-in-law of Cicero at Smyrna. Of Decimus Brutus, who attacked Marseilles by sea, one Camillus cut off the head and sent it as a present to Antony. Curio, who attempted to master the province of Africa on behalf of Cæsar, rushed amidst his enemy's swords and was slaughtered. King Juba, who conquered him, failing to kill himself, had himself killed by a slave. Attius Varus, who had held the province for Pompey, fell afterwards at Munda. Marc Antony, Cæsar's great lieutenant in the Pharsalian wars, stabbed himself. Cassius Longinus, another lieutenant under Cæsar, was drowned. Scipio, Pompey's partner in greatness at Pharsalia, destroyed himself in Africa. Bibulus, his chief admiral, pined to death. Young Ptolemy, to whom Pompey fled, was drowned in the Nile. The fate of his sister Cleopatra

is known to all the world. Pharnaces, Cæsar's enemy in Asia, fell in battle. Cato destroyed himself at Utica. Pompey's eldest son, Cnæus, was caught wounded in Spain and slaughtered. Sextus the younger was killed some years afterwards by one of Antony's soldiers. Brutus and Cassius, the two great conspirators, both committed suicide. But of these two we hear little or nothing in the Commentaries; nor of Augustus Cæsar, who did contrive to live in spite of all the bloodshed through which he had waded to the throne. Among the whole number there are not above three, if so many, who died fairly fighting in battle.

The above is a list of the names of men of mark,—of warriors chiefly, of men who, with their eyes open, knowing what was before them, went out to encounter danger for certain purposes. The bloody catalogue is so complete, so nearly comprises all whose names are mentioned, that it strikes the reader with almost a comic horror. But when we come to the slaughter of whole towns, the devastation of country effected purposely that men and women might starve, to the abandonment of the old, the young, and the tender, that they might perish on the hillsides, to the mutilation of crowds of men, to the burning of cities told us in a passing word, to the drowning of many thousands, —mentioned as we should mention the destruction of a brood of rats,—the comedy is all over, and the heart becomes sick. Then it is that we remember that the coming of Christ has changed all things, and that men now,—though terrible things have been done since Christ came to us,—are not as men were in the days of Cæsar.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR DRIVES FIRST THE SWISS AND THEN THE GERMANS OUT OF GAUL.—B.C. 58.

It has been remarked in the preceding chapter that Cæsar does not appear to have received any commission for the subjugation of Gaul when he took military charge of his three provinces. The Gauls were still feared in Rome, and it was his duty to see that they did not make their way over the Alps into the Roman territory. It was also his duty to protect from invasion, and also from rebellion, that portion of Gaul which had already been constituted a Roman province, but in which the sympathies of the people were still rather with their old brethren than with their new masters. The experience, however, which we have of great and encroaching empires tells us how probable it is that the protection of that which the strong already holds should lead to the grasping of more, till at last all has been grasped. It is thus that our own empire in India has grown. It was thus that the Spanish empire grew in America. It is thus that the empire of the United States is now growing. It was thus that Prussia, driven, as we all remember, by

the necessity of self-preservation, took Nassau the other day, and Hanover and Holstein and Hesse. It was thus that the wolf claimed all the river, not being able to endure the encroaching lamb. The humane reader of history execrates, as he reads, the cruel, all-absorbing, ravenous wolf. But the philosophical reader perceives that in this way, and in no other, is civilisation carried into distant lands. The wolf, though he be a ravenous wolf, brings with him energy and knowledge.

What may have been Cæsar's own aspirations in regard to Gaul, when the government of the provinces was confided to him, we have no means of knowing. We may surmise,—indeed we feel that we know,—that he had a project in hand much greater to him, in his view of its result, than could be the adding of any new province to the Republic, let the territory added be as wide as all Gaul. He had seen enough of Roman politics to know that real power in Rome could only belong to a master of legions. Both Marius and Sulla had prevailed in the city by means of the armies which they had levied as the trusted generals of the Republic. Pompey had had his army trained to conquest in the East, and it had been expected that he also would use it to the same end. He had been magnanimous, or half-hearted, or imprudent, as critics of his conduct might choose to judge him then and may choose to judge him now, and on reaching Italy from the East had disbanded his legions. As a consequence, he was at that moment, when Cæsar was looking out into the future and preparing his own

career, fain to seek some influence in the city by joining himself in a secret compact with Cæsar, his natural enemy, and with Crassus. Cæsar, seeing all this, knowing how Marius and Sulla had succeeded and had failed, seeing what had come of the magnanimity of Pompey—resolved no doubt that, whatever might be the wars in which they should be trained, he would have trained legions at his command. When, therefore, he first found a cause for war, he was ready for war. He had not been long proconsul before there came a wicked lamb and drank at his stream.

In describing to us the way in which he conquered lamb after lamb throughout the whole country which he calls Gallia, he tells us almost nothing of himself. Of his own political ideas, of his own ambition, even of his doings in Italy through those winter months which he generally passed on the Roman side of the Alps, having left his army in winter quarters under his lieutenants, he says but a very few words. His record is simply the record of the campaigns; and although he now and then speaks of the dignity of the Republic, he hardly ever so far digresses from the narrative as to give to the reader any idea of the motives by which he is actuated. Once in these seven memoirs of seven years' battling in Gaul, and once only, does he refer to a motive absolutely personal to himself. When he succeeded in slaughtering a fourth of the emigrating Swiss, which was his first military success in Gaul, he tells us that he had then revenged an injury to himself as well as an injury to the Republic, because the grandfather of his father-in-law

had in former wars been killed by the very tribe which he had just destroyed!

It is to be observed, also, that he does not intentionally speak in the first person, and that when he does so it is in some passage of no moment, in which the personality is accidental and altogether trivial. He does not speak of "I" and "me," but of Cæsar, as though he, Cæsar, who wrote the Commentary, were not the Cæsar of whom he is writing. Not unfrequently he speaks strongly in praise of himself; but as there is no humility in his tone, so also is there no pride, even when he praises himself. He never seems to boast, though he tells us of his own exploits as he does of those of his generals and centurions. Without any diffidence he informs us now and again how, at the end of this or that campaign, a "supplication," or public festival and thanksgiving for his victories, was decreed in Rome, on the hearing of the news,—to last for fifteen or twenty days, as the case might be.

Of his difficulties at home,—the political difficulties with which he had to contend,—he says never a word. And yet at times they must have been very harassing. We hear from other sources that during these wars in Gaul his conduct was violently reprobated in Rome, in that he had, with the utmost cruelty, attacked and crushed states supposed to be in amity with Rome, and that it was once even proposed to give him up to the enemy as a punishment for grievous treachery to the enemy. Had it been so resolved by the Roman Senate, —had such a law been enacted,—the power to carry out the law would have been wanted. It was easier

to grant a "supplication" for twenty days than to stop his career after his legions had come to know him.

Nor is there very much said by Cæsar of his strategic difficulties; though now and then, especially when his ships are being knocked about on the British coast, and again when the iron of his heel has so bruised the Gauls that they all turn against him in one body under Vercingetorix, the reader is allowed to see that he is pressed hard enough. But it is his rule to tell the thing he means to do, the way he does it, and the completeness of the result, in the fewest possible words. If any student of the literature of battles would read first Cæsar's seven books of the Gallic War, and then Mr Kinglake's first four volumes of the 'Invasion of the Crimea,' he would be able to compare two most wonderful examples of the dexterous use of words, in the former of which the narrative is told with the utmost possible brevity, and in the latter with almost the utmost possible prolixity. And yet each narrative is equally clear, and each equally distinguished by so excellent an arrangement of words, that the reader is forced to acknowledge that the story is told to him by a great master.

In praising others,—his lieutenants, his soldiers, and occasionally his enemies,—Cæsar is often enthusiastic, though the praise is conferred by a word or two,—is given, perhaps, simply in an epithet added on for that purpose to a sentence planned with a wholly different purpose. Of blame he is very sparing; so much so, that it almost seems that he looked upon certain imperfections, in regard even to faith as well as valour

or prudence, as necessary to humanity, and pardonable because of their necessity. He can tell of the absolute destruction of a legion through the folly and perhaps cowardice of one of his lieutenants, without heaping a word of reproach on the name of the unfortunate. He can relate how a much-favoured tribe fell off from their faith again and again without expressing anger at their faithlessness, and can explain how they were,—hardly forgiven, but received again as friends,—because it suited him so to treat them. But again he can tell us, without apparently a quiver of the pen, how he could devote to destruction a city with all its women and all its children, so that other cities might know what would come to them if they did not yield and obey, and become vassals to the godlike hero in whose hands Providence had placed their lives and their possessions.

It appears that Cæsar never failed to believe in himself. He is far too simple in his language, and too conscious of his own personal dignity, to assert that he has never been worsted. But his very simplicity seems to convey the assurance that such cannot ultimately be the result of any campaign in which he is engaged. He seems to imply that victory attends him so certainly that it would be futile in any case to discuss its probability. He feared no one, and was therefore the cause of awe to others. He could face his own legions when they would not obey his call to arms, and reduce them to obedience by a word. Lucan, understanding his character well, says of him that "he deserved to be feared, for he feared nothing;"

"meruitque timeri Nil metuens." He writes of himself as we might imagine some god would write who knew that his divine purpose must of course prevail, and who would therefore never be in the way of entertaining a doubt. With Cæsar there is always this godlike simplicity, which makes his "Veni, vidi, vici," the natural expression of his mind as to his own mode of action. The same thing is felt in the very numerous but very brief records of the punishments which he inflicted. Cities are left desolate, as it were with a wave of his hand, but he hardly deigns to say that his own hand has even been waved. He tells us of one Acco who had opposed him, that, "Graviore sententiâ pronunciatâ,"—as though there had been some jury to pronounce this severe sentence, which was in fact pronounced only by himself, Cæsar,—he inflicted punishment on him "more majorum." We learn from other sources that this punishment consisted in being stripped naked, confined by the neck in a cleft stick, and then being flogged to death. In the next words, having told us in half a sentence that he had made the country too hot to hold the fugitive accomplices of the tortured chief, he passes on into Italy with the majestic step of one much too great to dwell long on these small but disagreeable details. And we feel that he is too great.

It has been already said that the great proconsular wolf was not long in hearing that a lamb had come down to drink of his stream. The Helvetii, or Swiss, as we call them,—those tribes which lived on the Lake Leman, and among the hills and valleys to the north

of the lake,—had made up their minds that they were inhabiting but a poor sort of country, and that they might considerably better themselves by leaving their mountains and going out into some part of Gaul, in which they might find themselves stronger than the existing tribes, and might take possession of the fat of the land. In doing so, their easiest way out of their own country would lie by the Rhone, where it now runs through Geneva into France. But in taking this route the Swiss would be obliged to pass over a corner of the Roman province. Here was a case of the lamb troubling the waters with a vengeance. When this was told to Cæsar,—that these Swiss intended, "facere iter per Provinciam nostram"—"to do their travelling through our Province,"—he hurried over the Alps into Gaul, and came to Geneva as fast as he could travel.

He begins his first book by a geographical definition of Gaul, which no doubt was hardly accurate, but which gives us a singularly clear idea of that which Cæsar desired to convey. In speaking of Gallia he intends to signify the whole country from the outflow of the Rhine into the ocean down to the Pyrenees, and then eastward to the Rhone, to the Swiss mountains, and the borders of the Roman Province. This he divides into three parts, telling us that the Belgians inhabited the part north of the Seine and Marne, the people of Aquitania the part south of the Garonne, and the Gauls or Celts the intermediate territory. Having so far described the scene of his action, he rushes off at once to the dreadful sin of the Swiss emigrants in desiring to pass through "our Province."

He has but one legion in Further Gaul,—that is, in the Roman province on the further side of the Alps from Rome; and therefore, when ambassadors come to him from the Swiss, asking permission to go through the corner of land, and promising that they will do no harm in their passage, he temporises with them. He can't give them an answer just then, but must think of it. They must come back to him by a certain day,—when he will have more soldiers ready. Of course he refuses. The Swiss make some slight attempt, but soon give that matter up in despair. There is another way by which they can get out of their mountains,—through the territory of a people called Sequani; and for doing this they obtain leave. But Cæsar knows how injurious the Swiss lambs will be to him and his wolves, should they succeed in getting round to the back of his Province,—that Roman Province which left the name of Provence in modern France till France refused to be divided any longer into provinces. And he is, moreover, invited by certain friends of the Roman Republic, called the Ædui, to come and stop these rough Swiss travellers. He is always willing to help the Ædui, although these Ædui are a fickle, inconstant people,—and he is, above all things, willing to get to war. So he comes upon the rear of the Swiss when three portions of the people have passed the river Arar (Saone), and one portion is still behind. This hindermost tribe,—for the wretches were all of one tribe or mountain canton,—he sets upon and utterly destroys; and on this occasion congratulates himself on having

avenged himself upon the slayers of the grandfather of his father-in-law.

There can be nothing more remarkable in history than this story of the attempted emigration of the Helvetii, which Cæsar tells us without the expression of any wonder. The whole people made up their minds that, as their borders were narrow, their numbers increasing, and their courage good, they would go forth,—men, women, and children,—and seek other homes. We read constantly of the emigrations of people,—of the Northmen from the north covering the southern plains, of Danes and Jutes entering Britain, of men from Scandinavia coming down across the Rhine, and the like. We know that after this fashion the world has become peopled. But we picture to ourselves generally a concourse of warriors going forth and leaving behind them homes and friends, to whom they may or may not return. With these Swiss wanderers there was to be no return. All that they could not take with them they destroyed, burning their houses, and burning even their corn, so that there should be no means of turning their steps backward. They do make considerable progress, getting as far into France as Autun,—three-fourths of them at least getting so far; but near this they are brought to an engagement by Cæsar, who outgenerals them on a hill. The prestige of the Romans had not as yet established itself in these parts, and the Swiss nearly have the best of it. Cæsar owns, as he does not own again above once or twice, that the battle between them was very long, and for long very doubtful. But

at last the poor Helvetii are driven in slaughter. Cæsar, however, is not content that they should simply fly. He forces them back upon their old territory,—upon their burnt houses and devastated fields,—lest certain Germans should come and live there, and make themselves disagreeable. And they go back;—so many, at least, go back as are not slain in the adventure. With great attempt at accuracy, Cæsar tells us that 368,000 human beings went out on the expedition, and that 110,000, or less than a third, found their way back. Of those that perished, many hecatombs had been offered up to the shade of his father-in-law's grandfather.

Hereupon the Gauls begin to see how great a man is Cæsar. He tells us that no sooner was that war with the Swiss finished than nearly all the tribes of Gallia send to congratulate him. And one special tribe, those Ædui,—of whom we hear a great deal, and whom we never like because they are thoroughly anti-Gallican in all their doings till they think that Cæsar is really in trouble, and then they turn upon him,—have to beg of him a great favour. Two tribes,—the Ædui, whose name seems to have left no trace in France, and the Arverni, whom we still know in Auvergne,—have been long contending for the upper hand; whereupon the Arverni and their friends the Sequani have called in the assistance of certain Germans from across the Rhine. It went badly then with the Ædui. And now one of their kings, named Divitiacus, implores the help of Cæsar. Would Cæsar be kind enough to expel these horrid Germans, and

get back the hostages, and free them from a burdensome dominion, and put things a little to rights? And, indeed, not only were the Ædui suffering from these Germans, and their king, Ariovistus; it is going still worse with the Sequani, who had called them in. In fact, Ariovistus was an intolerable nuisance to that eastern portion of Gaul. Would Cæsar be kind enough to drive him out? Cæsar consents, and then we are made to think of another little fable,—of the prayer which the horse made to the man for assistance in his contest with the stag, and of the manner in which the man got upon the horse, and never got down again. Cæsar was not slow to mount, and when once in the saddle, certainly did not mean to leave it.

Cæsar tells us his reasons for undertaking this commission. The Ædui had often been called "brothers" and "cousins" by the Roman Senate; and it was not fitting that men who had been so honoured should be domineered over by Germans. And then, unless these marauding Germans could be stopped, they would fall into the habit of coming across the Rhine, and at last might get into the Province, and by that route into Italy itself. And Ariovistus himself was personally so arrogant a man that the thing must be made to cease. So Cæsar sends ambassadors to Ariovistus, and invites the barbarian to a meeting. The barbarian will not come to the meeting. If he wanted to see the Roman, he would go to the Roman: if the Roman wants to see him, the Roman may come to him. Such is the reply of Ariovistus. Ambassadors pass between them, and there is a good deal of argument, in which

the barbarian has the best of it. Cæsar, with his god-like simplicity, scorns not to give the barbarian the benefit of his logic. Ariovistus reminds Cæsar that the Romans have been in the habit of governing the tribes conquered by them after their fashion, without interference from him, Ariovistus; and that the Germans claim and mean to exercise the same right. He goes on to say that he is willing enough to live in amity with the Romans; but will Cæsar be kind enough to remember that the Germans are a people unconquered in war, trained to the use of arms, and how hardy he might judge when he was told that for fourteen years they had not slept under a roof? In the mean time other Gauls were complaining, and begging for assistance. The Treviri, people of the country where Treves now stands, are being harassed by the terrible yellow-haired Suevi, who at this time seem to have possessed nearly the whole of Prussia as it now exists on the further side of the Rhine, and who had the same desire to come westward that the Prussians have evinced since. And a people called the Harudes, from the Danube, are also harassing the poor Ædui. Cæsar, looking at these things, sees that unless he is quick, the northern and southern Germans may join their forces. He gets together his commissariat, and flies at Ariovistus very quickly.

Throughout all his campaigns, Cæsar, as did Napoleon afterwards, effected everything by celerity. He preaches to us no sermon on the subject, favours us with no disquisition as to the value of despatch in war, but constantly tells us that he moved all his army

"magnis itineribus"—by very rapid marches; that he went on with his work night and day, and took precautions "magno opere,"—with much labour and all his care,—to be beforehand with the enemy. In this instance Ariovistus tries to reach a certain town of the poor Sequani, then called Vesontio, now known to us as Besançon,—the same name, but very much altered. It consisted of a hill, or natural fortress, almost surrounded by a river, or natural fosse. There is nothing, says Cæsar, so useful in a war as the possession of a place thus naturally strong. Therefore he hurries on and gets before Ariovistus, and occupies the town. The reader already begins to feel that Cæsar is destined to divine success. The reader indeed knows that beforehand, and expects nothing worse for Cæsar than hairbreadth escapes. But the Romans themselves had not as yet the same confidence in him. Tidings are brought to him at Vesontio that his men are terribly afraid of the Germans. And so, no doubt, they were. These Romans, though by the art of war they had been made fine soldiers,—though they had been trained in the Eastern conquests and the Punic wars, and invasions of all nations around them,—were nevertheless, up to this day, greatly afraid even of the Gauls. The coming of the Gauls into Italy had been a source of terror to them ever since the days of Brennus. And the Germans were worse than the Gauls. The boast made by Ariovistus that his men never slept beneath a roof was not vain or useless. They were a horrid, hirsute, yellow-haired people, the flashing aspect of whose eyes could hardly be endured

by an Italian. The fear is so great that the soldiers "sometimes could not refrain even from tears;"—"neque interdum lacrimas tenere poterant." When we remember what these men became after they had been a while with Cæsar, their blubbering awe of the Germans strikes us as almost comic. And we are reminded that the Italians of those days were, as they are now, more prone to show the outward signs of emotion than is thought to be decorous with men in more northern climes. We can hardly realise the idea of soldiers crying from fear. Cæsar is told by his centurions that so great is this feeling, that the men will probably refuse to take up their arms when called upon to go out and fight; whereupon he makes a speech to all his captains and lieutenants, full of boasting, full of scorn, full, no doubt, of falsehood, but using a bit of truth whenever the truth could aid him. We know that among other great gifts Cæsar had the gift of persuasion. From his tongue, also, as from Nestor's, could flow "words sweeter than honey,"—or sharper than steel. At any rate, if others will not follow him, his tenth legion, he knows, will be true to him. He will go forth with that one legion,—if necessary, with that legion of true soldiers, and with no others. Though he had been at his work but a short time, he already had his picked men, his guards, his favourite regiments, his tenth legion; and he knew well how to use their superiority and valour for the creation of those virtues in others.

Then Ariovistus sends ambassadors, and declares that he now is willing to meet Cæsar. Let them meet on a certain plain, each bringing only his cavalry

guard. Ariovistus suggests that foot-soldiers might be dangerous, knowing that Cæsar's foot-soldiers would be Romans, and that his cavalry are Gauls. Cæsar agrees, but takes men out of his own tenth legion, mounted on the horses of the less-trusted allies. The accounts of these meetings, and the arguments which we are told are used on this and that side, are very interesting. We are bound to remember that Cæsar is telling the story for both sides, but we feel that he tries to tell it fairly. Ariovistus had very little to say to Cæsar's demands, but a great deal to say about his own exploits. The meeting, however, was broken up by an attack made by the Germans on Cæsar's mounted guard, and Cæsar retires,—not, however, before he has explained to Ariovistus his grand idea of the protection due by Rome to her allies. Then Ariovistus proposes another meeting, which Cæsar declines to attend, sending, however, certain ambassadors. Ariovistus at once throws the ambassadors into chains, and then there is nothing for it but a fight.

The details of all these battles cannot be given within our short limits, and there is nothing special in this battle to tempt us to dwell upon it. Cæsar describes to us the way in which the German cavalry and infantry fought together, the footmen advancing from amidst the horsemen, and then returning for protection. His own men fight well, and the Germans, in spite of their flashing eyes, are driven headlong in a rout back to the Rhine. Ariovistus succeeds in getting over the river and saving himself, but he has to leave his two daughters behind, and his two

wives. The two wives and one of the daughters are killed; the other daughter is taken prisoner. Cæsar had sent as one of his ambassadors to the German a certain dear friend of his, who, as we heard before, was, with his comrade, at once subjected to chains. In the flight this ambassador is recovered. "Which thing, indeed, gave Cæsar not less satisfaction than the victory itself, —in that he saw one of the honestest men of the Province of Gaul, his own familiar friend and guest, rescued from the hands of his enemies and restored to him. Nor did Fortune diminish this gratification by any calamity inflicted on the man. Thrice, as he himself told the tale, had it been decided by lot in his own presence whether he should then be burned alive or reserved for another time." So Cæsar tells the story, and we like him for his enthusiasm, and are glad to hear that the comrade ambassador also is brought back.

The yellow-haired Suevi, when they hear of all this, desist from their invasion on the lower Rhine, and hurry back into their own country, not without misfortunes on the road. So great already is Cæsar's name, that tribes, acting as it were on his side, dare to attack even the Suevi. Then, in his "Veni, vidi, vici" style, he tells us that, having in one summer finished off two wars, he is able to put his army into winter quarters even before the necessary time, so that he himself may go into his other Gaul across the Alps, —"ad conventus agendos,"— to hold some kind of session or assizes for the government of his province, and especially to collect more soldiers.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR SUBDUES THE BELGIAN TRIBES.—B.C. 57.

THE man had got on the horse's back, but the horse had various disagreeable enemies in attacking whom the man might be very useful, and the horse was therefore not as yet anxious to unseat his rider. Would Cæsar be so good as to go and conquer the Belgian tribes? Cæsar is not slow in finding reasons for so doing. The Belgians are conspiring together against him. They think that as all Gaul has been reduced,—or "pacified," as Cæsar calls it,—the Roman conqueror will certainly bring his valour to bear upon them, and that they had better be ready. Cæsar suggests that it would no doubt be felt by them as a great grievance that a Roman army should remain all the winter so near to them. In this way, and governed by these considerations, the Belgian lambs disturb the stream very sadly, and the wolf has to look to it. He collects two more legions, and, as soon as the earth brings forth the food necessary for his increased number of men and horses, he hurries off against these Belgian tribes of Northern Gallia. Of these, one tribe, the

Remi, immediately send word to him that they are not wicked lambs like the others; they have not touched the waters. All the other Belgians, say the Remi, and with them a parcel of Germans, are in a conspiracy together. Even their very next-door neighbours, their brothers and cousins, the Suessiones, are wicked; but they, the Remi, have steadily refused even to sniff at the stream, which they acknowledge to be the exclusive property of the good wolf. Would the wolf be kind enough to come and take possession of them and all their belongings, and allow them to be the humblest of his friends? We come to hate these Remi, as we do the Ædui; but they are wise in their generation, and escape much of the starvation and massacring and utter ruin to which the other tribes are subjected. Among almost all these so-called Belgian tribes we find the modern names which are familiar to us. Rheims is in the old country of the Remi, Soissons in that of the Suessiones. Beauvais represents the Bellovaci, Amiens the Ambiani, Arras the Atrebates, Treves the Treviri,—as has been pointed out before. Silva Arduenna is, of course, the Forest of Ardennes.

The campaign is commenced by an attack made by the other Belgians on those unnatural Remi who have gone over to the Romans. There is a town of theirs, Bibrax, now known, or rather not known, as Bievre, and here the Remi are besieged by their brethren. When Bibrax is on the point of falling,—and we can imagine what would then have been the condition of the townsmen,—they send to Cæsar, who is only eight miles distant. Unless Cæsar will help, they cannot endure

any longer such onslaught as is made on them. Cæsar, having bided his time, of course sends help, and the poor besieging Belgians fall into inextricable confusion. They agree to go home, each to his own country, and from thence to proceed to the defence of any tribe which Cæsar might attack. "So," says Cæsar, as he ends the story of this little affair, "without any danger on our part, our men killed as great a number of theirs as the space of the day would admit." When the sun set, and not till then, came an end to the killing,—such having been the order of Cæsar.

That these Belgians had really formed any intention of attacking the Roman province, or even any Roman ally, there is no other proof than that Cæsar tells us that they had all conspired. But whatever might be their sin, or what the lack of sin on their part, he is determined to go on with the war till he has subjugated them altogether. On the very next day he attacks the Suessiones, and gets as far as Noviodunum, —Noyons. The people there, when they see how terrible are his engines of war, give up all idea of defending themselves, and ask for terms. The Bellovaci do the same. At the instigation of his friends the Remi, he spares the one city, and, to please the Ædui, the other. But he takes away all their arms, and exacts hostages. From the Bellovaci, because they have a name as a powerful people, he takes 600 hostages. Throughout all these wars it becomes a matter of wonder to us what Cæsar did with all these hostages, and how he maintained them. It was, however, no doubt clearly understood that they would be killed if

the town, or state, or tribe by which they were given should misbehave, or in any way thwart the great conqueror.

The Ambiani come next, and the ancestors of our intimate friends at Amiens soon give themselves up. The next to them are the Nervii, a people far away to the north, where Lille now is and a considerable portion of Flanders. Of these Cæsar had heard wonderful travellers' tales. They were a people who admitted no dealers among them, being in this respect very unlike their descendants, the Belgians of to-day; they drank no wine, and indulged in no luxuries, lest their martial valour should be diminished. They send no ambassadors to Cæsar, and resolve to hold their own if they can. They trust solely to infantry in battle, and know nothing of horses. Against the cavalry of other nations, however, they are wont to protect themselves by artificial hedges, which they make almost as strong as walls.

Cæsar in attacking the Nervii had eight legions, and he tells us how he advanced against them "consuetudine suâ,"—after his usual fashion. For some false information had been given to the Nervii on this subject, which brought them into considerable trouble. He sent on first his cavalry, then six legions, the legions consisting solely of foot-soldiers; after these all the baggage, commissariat, and burden of the army, comprising the materials necessary for sieges; and lastly, the two other legions, which had been latest enrolled. It may be as well to explain here that the legion in the time of Cæsar consisted on paper of six thousand heavy-

armed foot-soldiers. There were ten cohorts in a legion, and six centuries, or six hundred men, in each cohort. It may possibly be that, as with our regiments, the numbers were frequently not full. Eight full legions would thus have formed an army consisting of 48,000 infantry. The exact number of men under his orders Cæsar does not mention here or elsewhere.

According to his own showing, Cæsar is hurried into a battle before he knows where he is. Cæsar, he says, had everything to do himself, all at the same time,—to unfurl the standard of battle, to give the signal with the trumpet, to get back the soldiers from their work, to call back some who had gone to a distance for stuff to make a rampart, to draw up the army, to address the men, and then to give the word. In that matter of oratory, he only tells them to remember their old valour. The enemy was so close upon them, and so ready for fighting, that they could scarcely put on their helmets and take their shields out of their cases. So great was the confusion that the soldiers could not get to their own ranks, but had to fight as they stood, under any flag that was nearest to them. There were so many things against them, and especially those thick artificial hedges, which prevented them even from seeing, that it was impossible for them to fight according to any method, and in consequence there were vicissitudes of fortune. One is driven to feel that on this occasion Cæsar was caught napping. The Nervii did at times and places seem to be getting the best of it. The ninth and tenth legions pursue one tribe into a river, and then they have to fight them again, and drive them

out of the river. The eleventh and eighth, having put to flight another tribe, are attacked on the very river-banks. The twelfth and the seventh have their hands equally full, when Boduognatus, the Nervian chief, makes his way into the very middle of the Roman camp. So great is the confusion that the Treviri, who had joined Cæsar on this occasion as allies, although reputed the bravest of the cavalry of Gaul, run away home, and declare that the Romans are conquered. Cæsar, however, comes to the rescue, and saves his army on this occasion by personal prowess. When he saw how it was going,—"rem esse in angusto,"—how the thing had got itself into the very narrowest neck of a difficulty, he seizes a shield from a common soldier,—having come there himself with no shield,—and rushes into the fight. When the soldiers saw him, and saw, too, that what they did was done in his sight, they fought anew, and the onslaught of the enemy was checked.

Perhaps readers will wish that they could know how much of all this is exactly true. It reads as though it were true. We cannot in these days understand how one brave man at such a moment should be so much more effective than another, how he should be known personally to the soldiers of an army so large, how Cæsar should have known the names of the centurions,—for he tells us that he addresses them by name;—and yet it reads like truth; and the reader feels that as Cæsar would hardly condescend to boast, so neither would he be constrained by any modern feeling of humility from telling any truth of himself. It is as though Minerva were to tell us of some descent which she made

among the Trojans. The Nervii fight on, but of course they are driven in flight. The nation is all but destroyed, so that the very name can but hardly remain; —so at least we are told here, though we hear of them again as a tribe by no means destroyed or powerless. When out of six hundred senators there are but three senators left, when from sixty thousand fighting men the army has been reduced to scarcely five hundred, Cæsar throws the mantle of his mercy over the survivors. He allows them even to go and live in their own homes, and forbids their neighbours to harass them. There can be no doubt that Cæsar nearly got the worst of it in this struggle, and we may surmise that he learned a lesson which was of service to him in subsequent campaigns.

But there are still certain Aduatici to be disposed of before the summer is over,—people who had helped the Nervii,—who have a city of their own, and who live somewhere in the present Namur district.* At first they fight a little round the walls of their town; but when they see what terrible instruments Cæsar

* These people were the descendants of those Cimbri who, half a century before, had caused such woe to Rome! The Cimbri, we are told, had gone forth from their lands, and had been six times victorious over Roman armies, taking possession of "our Province," and threatening Italy and Rome. The whole empire of the Republic had been in danger, but was at last saved by the courage, skill, and rapidity of Marius. In going forth from their country they had left a remnant behind with such of their possessions as they could not carry with them; and these Aduatici were the children and grandchildren of that remnant. Cæsar doubtless remembered it all.

has, by means of which to get at them over their very walls,—how he can build up a great turret at a distance, which, at that distance, is ludicrous to them, but which he brings near to them, so that it overhangs them, from which to harass them with arrows and stones, and against which, so high is it, they have no defence—then they send out and beg for mercy. Surely, they say, Cæsar and the Romans must have more than human power. They will give up everything, if only Cæsar out of his mercy will leave to them their arms. They are always at war with all their neighbours; and where would they be without arms?

Cæsar replies. Merits of their own they have none. How could a tribe have merits against which Cæsar was at war? Nevertheless, such being his custom, he will admit them to some terms of grace if they surrender before his battering-ram has touched their walls. But as for their arms, surely they must be joking with him. Of course their arms must be surrendered. What he had done for the Nervii he would do for them. He would tell their neighbours not to hurt them. They agree, and throw their arms into the outside ditch of the town, but not quite all their arms. A part,—a third,—are cunningly kept back; and when Cæsar enters the town, they who have kept their arms, and others unarmed, try to escape from the town. They fight, and some thousands are slain. Others are driven back, and these are sold for slaves. Who, we wonder, could have been the purchasers, and at what price on that day was a man to be bought in the city of the Aduatici?

Then Cæsar learns through his lieutenant, young Crassus, the son of his colleague in the triumvirate, that all the Belgian states, from the Scheldt to the Bay of Biscay, have been reduced beneath the yoke of the Roman people. The Germans, too, send ambassadors to him, so convinced are they that to fight against him is of no avail,—so wonderful an idea of this last war has pervaded all the tribes of barbarians. But Cæsar is in a hurry, and can hear no ambassadors now. He wants to get into Italy, and they must come again to him next summer.

For all which glorious doings a public thanksgiving of fifteen days is decreed, as soon as the news is heard in Rome.

CHAPTER IV.

THIRD BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR SUBDUES THE WESTERN TRIBES OF GAUL.—B.C. 56.

In the first few lines of the third book we learn that Cæsar had an eye not only for conquest, but for the advantages of conquest also. When he went into Italy at the end of the last campaign, he sent one Galba, whose descendant became emperor after Nero, with the twelfth legion, to take up his winter quarters in the upper valley of the Rhone, in order that an easier traffic might be opened to traders passing over the Alps in and out of Northern Italy. It seems that the passage used was that of the Great St Bernard, and Galba placed himself with his legion at that junction of the valley which we all know so well as Martigny. Here, however, he was attacked furiously in his camp by the inhabitants of the valley, who probably objected to being dictated to as to the amount of toll to be charged upon the travelling traders, and was very nearly destroyed. The Romans, however, at last, when they had neither weapons nor food left for maintaining their camp, resolved to cut their way through their enemies. This they did so effectually that they slaughtered more

than ten thousand men, and the other twenty thousand of Swiss warriors all took to flight! Nevertheless Galba thought it as well to leave that inhospitable region, in which it was almost impossible to find food for the winter, and took himself down the valley and along the lake to the Roman Province. He made his winter-quarters among the Allobroges, who belonged to the Province,—a people living just south of the present Lyons. How the Allobroges liked it we are not told, but we know that they were then very faithful, although in former days they had given great trouble. Their position made faith to Rome almost a necessity. Whether, in such a position, Cæsar's lieutenants paid their way, and bought their corn at market price, we do not know. It was Cæsar's rule, no doubt, to make the country on which his army stood support his army.

When the number of men whom Cæsar took with him into countries hitherto unknown to him or his army is considered, and the apparently reckless audacity with which he did so, it must be acknowledged that he himself says very little about his difficulties. He must constantly have had armies for which to provide twice as large as our Crimean army,—probably as large as the united force of the English and French in the Crimea; and he certainly could not bring with him what he wanted in ships. The road from Balaclava up to the heights over Sebastopol, we know, was very bad; but it was short. The road from the foot of the Alps in the Roman province to the countries with which we were dealing in the last chapter could not, we should say, have been very good two thousand

years ago, and it certainly was very long;—nearly a hundred miles for Cæsar to every single one of those that were so terrible to us in the Crimea. Cæsar, however, carried but little with him beyond his arms and implements of war, and of those the heaviest he no doubt made as he went. The men had an allowance of corn per day, besides so much pay. We are told that the pay before Cæsar's time was 100 *asses* a-month for the legionaries,—the *as* being less than a penny,—and that this was doubled by Cæsar. We can conceive that the money troubled him comparatively slightly, but that the finding of the daily corn and forage for so large a host of men and horses must have been very difficult. He speaks of the difficulty often, but never with that despair which was felt as to the roasting of our coffee in the Crimea. We hear of his waiting till forage should have grown, and sometimes there are necessary considerations "de re frumentariâ," —about that great general question of provisions; but of crushing difficulties very little is said, and of bad roads not a word. One great advantage Cæsar certainly had over Lord Raglan;—he was his own special correspondent. Coffee his men certainly did not get; but if their corn were not properly roasted for them, and if, as would be natural, the men grumbled, he had with him no licensed collector of grumbles to make public the sufferings of his men.

And now, when this affair of Galba's had been finished,—when Cæsar, as he tells us, really did think that all Gaul was "pacatam," tranquillised, or at least subdued,—the Belgians conquered, the Germans driven

off, those Swiss fellows cut to pieces in the valley of the Rhone; when he thought that he might make a short visit into that other province of his, Illyricum, so that he might see what that was like,—he is told that another war has sprung up in Gaul! Young Crassus, with that necessity which of course was on him of providing winter food for the seventh legion which he had been ordered to take into Aquitania, has been obliged to send out for corn into the neighbouring countries. Of course a well-instructed young general, such as was Crassus, had taken hostages before he sent his men out among strange and wild barbarians. But in spite of that, the Veneti, a maritime people of ancient Brittany, just in that country of the Morbihan whither we now go to visit the works of the Druids at Carnac and Locmariaker, absolutely detained his two ambassadors;—so called afterwards, though in his first mention of them Cæsar names them as præfects and tribunes of the soldiers. Vannes, the capital of the department of the Morbihan, gives us a trace of the name of this tribe. The Veneti, who were powerful in ships, did not see why they should give their corn to Crassus. Cæsar, when he hears that ambassadors,—sacred ambassadors,—have been stopped, is filled with shame and indignation, and hurries off himself to look after the affair, having, as we may imagine, been able to see very little of Illyricum.

This horror of Cæsar in regard to his ambassadors,—in speaking of which he alludes to what the Gauls themselves felt when they came to understand what a thing they had done in making ambassadors prisoners,

—"legatos,"—a name that has always been held sacred and inviolate among all nations,—is very great, and makes him feel that he must really be in earnest. We are reminded of the injunctions, printed in Spanish, which the Spaniards distributed among the Indians of the continent, in the countries now called Venezuela and New Granada, explaining to the people, who knew nothing of Spanish or of printing, how they were bound to obey the orders of a distant king, who had the authority of a more distant Pope, who again,—so they claimed,—was delegated by a more distant God. The pain of history consists in the injustice of the wolf towards the lamb, joined to the conviction that thus, and no otherwise, could the lamb be brought to better than a sheepish mode of existence! But Cæsar was in earnest.* The following is a translation of the tenth section of this book; "There were these difficulties in carrying on the war which we have above shown."—He alludes to the maritime capacities of the people whom he desires to conquer.—"Many things, nevertheless, urged Cæsar on to this war;—the wrongs of those Roman knights who had been detained, rebellion set on foot after an agreed surrender,"—that any

* And Cæsar was no doubt indignant as well as earnest, though, perhaps, irrational in his indignation. We know how sacred was held to be the person of the Roman citizen, and remember Cicero's patriotic declaration, "Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum,—scelus verberari;" and again, the words which Horace puts into the mouth of Regulus when he asserts that the Roman soldier must be lost for ever in his shame, and useless, "Qui lora restrictis lacertis Sensit iners timuitque mortem."

such surrender had been made we do not hear, though we do hear, incidentally, that Crassus had taken hostages;—"a falling off from alliance after hostages had been given; conspiracy among so many tribes; and then this first consideration, that if this side of the country were disregarded, the other tribes might learn to think that they might take the same liberty. Then, when he bethought himself that, as the Gauls were prone to rebellion, and were quickly and easily excited to war, and that all men, moreover, are fond of liberty and hate a condition of subjection, he resolved that it would be well, rather than that other states should conspire,"—and to avoid the outbreak on behalf of freedom which might thus probably be made,—"that his army should be divided, and scattered about more widely." Treating all Gaul as a chess-board, he sends round to provide that the Treviri should be kept quiet. Readers will remember how far Treves is distant from the extremities of Brittany. The Belgians are to be looked to, lest they should rise and come and help. The Germans are to be prevented from crossing the Rhine. Labienus, who, during the Gallic wars, was Cæsar's general highest in trust, is to see to all this. Crassus is to go back into Aquitania and keep the south quiet. Titurius Sabinus, destined afterwards to a sad end, is sent with three legions,—eighteen thousand men,—among the neighbouring tribes of Northern Brittany and Normandy. "Young" Decimus Brutus,—Cæsar speaks of him with that kind affection which the epithet conveys, and we remember, as we read, that this Brutus appears afterwards in history as one of Cæsar's slayers,

in conjunction with his greater namesake,—young Decimus Brutus, the future conspirator in Rome, has confided to him the fleet which is to destroy these much less guilty distant conspirators, and Cæsar himself takes the command of his own legions on the spot. All this is told in fewer words than are here used in describing the telling, and the reader feels that he has to do with a mighty man, whose eyes are everywhere, and of whom an ordinary enemy would certainly say, Surely this is no man, but a god.

He tells us how great was the effect of his own presence on the shore, though the battle was carried on under young Brutus at sea. "What remained of the conflict," he says, after describing their manœuvres, "depended on valour, in which our men were far away the superior; and this was more especially true because the affair was carried on so plainly in the sight of Cæsar and the whole army that no brave deed could pass unobserved. For all the hills and upper lands, from whence the view down upon the sea was close, were covered by the army."

Of course he conquers the Veneti and other sea-going tribes, even on their own element. Whereupon they give themselves and all their belongings up to Cæsar. Cæsar, desirous that the rights of ambassadors shall hereafter be better respected among barbarians, determines that he must use a little severity. "Gravius vindicandum statuit;"—"he resolved that the offence should be expiated with more than ordinary punishment." Consequently, he kills all the senate, and sells all the other men as slaves! The pithy brevity, the

unapologetic dignity of the sentence, as he pronounced it and tells it to us, is heartrending, but, at this distance of time, delightful also. "Itaque, omni senatu necato, reliquos sub coronâ vendidit;"—"therefore, all the senate having been slaughtered, he sold the other citizens with chaplets on their heads;"—it being the Roman custom so to mark captives in war intended for sale. We can see him as he waves his hand and passes on. Surely he must be a god!

His generals in this campaign are equally successful. One Viridovix, a Gaul up in the Normandy country,—somewhere about Avranches or St Lo, we may imagine,—is entrapped into a fight, and destroyed with his army. Aquitania surrenders herself to Crassus, after much fighting, and gives up her arms.

Then Cæsar reflects that the Morini and the Menapii had as yet never bowed their heads to him. Boulogne and Calais stand in the now well-known territory of the Morini, but the Menapii lie a long way off, up among the mouths of the Scheldt and the Rhine,—the Low Countries of modern history,—an uncomfortable people then, who would rush into their woods and marshes after a spell of fighting, and who seemed to have no particular homes or cities that could be attacked or destroyed. It was nearly the end of summer just now, and the distance between, let us say, Vannes in Brittany, and Breda, or even Antwerp, seems to us to be considerable, when we remember the condition of the country, and the size of Cæsar's army. But he had a few weeks to fill up, and then he might feel that all Gaul had been "pacified." At present there was this

haughty little northern corner. "Omni Galliâ pacatâ, Morini Menapiique supererant;"—"all Gaul having been pacified, the Morini and Menapii remained." He was, moreover, no doubt beginning to reflect that from the Morini could be made the shortest journey into that wild Ultima Thule of an island in which lived the Britanni. Cæsar takes advantage of the few weeks, and attacks these uncomfortable people. When they retreat into the woods, he cuts the woods down. He does cut down an immense quantity of wood, but the enemy only recede into thicker and bigger woods. Bad weather comes on, and the soldiers can no longer endure life in their skin tents. Let us fancy these Italians encountering winter in undrained Flanders, with no walls or roofs to protect them, and ordered to cut down interminable woods! Had a 'Times' been then written and filed, instead of a "Commentary" from the hands of the General-in-chief, we should probably have heard of a good deal of suffering. As it is, we are only told that Cæsar had to give up his enterprise for that year. He therefore burned all their villages, laid waste all their fields, and then took his army down into a more comfortable region south of the Seine, and there put them into winter quarters,—not much to the comfort of the people there residing.

CHAPTER V.

FOURTH BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR CROSSES THE RHINE, SLAUGHTERS THE GERMANS, AND GOES INTO BRITAIN.—B.C. 55.

In the next year certain Germans, Usipetes and others, crossed the Rhine into Gaul, not far from the sea, as Cæsar tells us. He tells us again, that when he drove the Germans back over the river, it was near the confluence of the Meuse and the Rhine. When we remember how difficult it was for Cæsar to obtain information, we must acknowledge that his geography as to the passage of the Rhine out to the sea, and of the junction of the Rhine and the Meuse by the Waal, is wonderfully correct. The spot indicated as that at which the Germans were driven into the river would seem to be near Bommel in Holland, where the Waal and the Meuse join their waters, at the head of the island of Bommel, where Fort St André stands, or stood.*

* Cæsar speaks of the confluence of the Rhine and the "Mosa" as the spot at which he drove the Germans into the river,—and in various passages, speaking of the Mosa, clearly means the Meuse. It appears, however, to be the opinion of English scholars who have studied the topography of Cæsar's

Those wonderful Suevi, among whom the men alternately fight and plough, year and year about, caring more, however, for cattle than they do for corn, who are socialists in regard to land, having no private property in their fields,—who, all of them, from their youth upwards, do just what they please,—large, bony men, who wear, even in these cold regions, each simply some scanty morsel of skin covering,—who bathe in rivers all the year through, who deal with traders only to sell the spoils of war, who care but little for their horses, and ride, when they do ride, without saddles,—thinking nothing of men to whom such delicate appendages are necessary,—who drink no wine, and will have no neighbours near them,—these ferocious Suevi have driven other German tribes over the Rhine into Gaul. Cæsar, hearing this, is filled with apprehension. He knows the weakness of his poor friends the Gauls,—how prone they are to gossiping, of what a restless temper. It is in the country of the Menapii, the tribe with which he did not quite finish his little affair in the last chapter, that these Germans are settling; and there is no knowing what trouble the intruders may give him if he allows them to make themselves at home on that

campaigns with much labour, that the confluence of the Moselle and Rhine, from which Coblentz derives its name, is the spot intended. Napoleon, who has hardly made himself an authority on the affairs of Cæsar generally, but who is thought to be an authority in regard to topography, holds to the opinion that the site in Holland is intended to be described. Readers who are anxious on the subject can choose between the two; but readers who are not anxious will probably be more numerous.

side of the river. So he hurries off to give help to the poor Menapii.

Of course there is a sending of ambassadors. The Germans acknowledge that they have been turned out of their own lands by their brethren, the Suevi, who are better men than they are. But they profess that, in fighting, the Suevi, and the Suevi only, are their masters. Not even the immortal gods can stand against the Suevi. But they also are Germans, and are not at all afraid of the Romans. But in the proposition which they make they show some little awe. Will Cæsar allow them to remain where they are, or allot to them some other region on that side of the Rhine? Cæsar tells them that they may go and live, if they please, with the Ubii,—another tribe of Germans who occupy the Rhine country, probably where Cologne now stands, or perhaps a little north of it, and who seem already to have been forced over the Rhine,—they, or some of them,—and to have made good their footing somewhere in the region in which Charlemagne built his church, now called Aix-la-Chapelle. There they are, Germans still, and probably are so because these Ubii made good their footing. The Ubii also are in trouble with the Suevi; and if these intruders will go and join the Ubii, Cæsar will make it all straight for them. The intruders hesitate, but do not go, and at last attack Cæsar's cavalry, not without some success. During this fight there is double treachery,—first on the part of the Germans, and then on Cæsar's part,—which is chiefly memorable for the attack made on Cæsar in Rome. It was in consequence of the deceit here

practised that it was proposed by his enemies in the city that he should be given up by the Republic to the foe. Had any such decree been passed, it would not have been easy to give up Cæsar.

The Germans are, of course, beaten, and they are driven into the river on those low and then undrained regions in which the Rhine and the Meuse and the Waal confuse themselves and confuse travellers;—either here, or much higher up the river at Coblentz; but the reader will already have settled that question for himself at the beginning of the chapter. Cæsar speaks of these Germans as though they were all drowned,—men, women, and children. They had brought their entire families with them, and, when the fighting went against them, with their entire families they fled into the river. Cæsar was pursuing them after the battle, and they precipitated themselves over the banks. There, overcome by fear, fatigue, and the waters, they perished. There was computed to be a hundred and eighty thousand of them who were destroyed; but the Roman army was safe to a man.*

Then Cæsar made up his mind to cross the river. It seems that he had no intention of extending the empire of the Republic into what he called Germany, but that he thought it necessary to frighten the Germans. The cavalry of those intruding Usipetes had, luckily for them, been absent, foraging over the river; and he now sent to the Sigambri, among whom they

* "Hostium numerus capitum CDXXX millium fuisset," from which words we are led to suppose that there were 180,000 fighting men, besides the women and children.

had taken refuge, desiring that these horsemen should be given up to him. But the Sigambri will not obey. The Germans seem to have understood that Cæsar had Gaul in his hands, to do as he liked with it; but they grudged his interference beyond the Rhine. Cæsar, however, always managed to have a set of friends among his enemies, to help him in adjusting his enmities. We have heard of the Ædui in central Gaul, and of the Remi in the north. The Ubii were his German friends, who were probably at this time occupying both banks of the river; and the Ubii ask him just to come over and frighten their neighbours. Cæsar resolves upon gratifying them. And as it is not consistent either with his safety or with his dignity to cross the river in boats, he determines to build a bridge.

Is there a schoolboy in England, or one who has been a schoolboy, at any Cæsar-reading school, who does not remember those memorable words, "Tigna bina sesquipedalia," with which Cæsar begins his graphic account of the building of the bridge? When the breadth of the river is considered, its rapidity, and the difficulty which there must have been in finding tools and materials for such a construction, in a country so wild and so remote from Roman civilisation, the creation of this bridge fills us with admiration for Cæsar's spirit and capacity. He drove down piles into the bed of the river, two and two, prone against the stream. We could do that now, though hardly as quickly as Cæsar did it; but we should want coffer-dams and steam-pumps, patent rammers, and a clerk of the works. He explains to us that he so built the foun-

dations that the very strength of the stream added to their strength and consistency. In ten days the whole thing was done, and the army carried over. Cæsar does not tell us at what suffering, or with the loss of how many men. It is the simplicity of everything which is so wonderful in these Commentaries. We have read of works constructed by modern armies, and of works which modern armies could not construct. We remember the road up from Balaclava, and the railway which was sent out from England. We know, too, what are the aids and appliances with which science has furnished us. But yet in no modern warfare do the difficulties seem to have been so light, so little worthy of mention, as they were to Cæsar. He made his bridge and took over his army, cavalry and all, in ten days. There must have been difficulty and hardship, and the drowning, we should fear, of many men; but Cæsar says nothing of all this.

Ambassadors immediately are sent. From the moment in which the bridge was begun, the Sigambri ran away and hid themselves in the woods. Cæsar burns all their villages, cuts down all their corn, and travels down into the country of the Ubii. He comforts them; and tidings of his approach then reach those terrible Suevi. They make ready for war on a grand scale; but Cæsar, reflecting that he had not brought his army over the river for the sake of fighting the Suevi, and telling us that he had already done enough for honour and for the good of the cause, took his army back after eighteen days spent in the journey, and destroyed his bridge.

Then comes a passage which makes a Briton vacillate between shame at his own ancient insignificance, and anger at Cæsar's misapprehension of his ancient character. There were left of the fighting season after Cæsar came back across the Rhine just a few weeks; and what can he do better with them than go over and conquer Britannia? This first record of an invasion upon us comes in at the fag-end of a chapter, and the invasion was made simply to fill up the summer! Nobody, Cæsar tells us, seemed to know anything about the island; and yet it was the fact that in all his wars with the Gauls, the Gauls were helped by men out of Britain. Before he will face the danger with his army he sends over a trusty messenger, to look about and find out something as to the coasts and harbours. The trusty messenger does not dare to disembark, but comes back and tells Cæsar what he has seen from his ship. Cæsar, in the mean time, has got together a great fleet somewhere in the Boulogne and Calais country; and, —so he says,—messengers have come to him from Britain, whither rumours of his purpose have already flown, saying that they will submit themselves to the Roman Republic. We may believe just as much of that as we please. But he clearly thinks less of the Boulogne and Calais people than he does even of the Britons, which is a comfort to us. When these people,—then called Morini,—came to him, asking pardon for having dared to oppose him once before, and offering any number of hostages, and saying that they had been led on by bad advice, Cæsar admitted them into some degree of grace; not wishing, as he tells us, to be

kept out of Britain by the consideration of such very small affairs. "Neque has tantularum rerum occupationes sibi Britanniæ anteponendas judicabat." We hope that the Boulogne and Calais people understand and appreciate the phrase. Having taken plenty of hostages, he determines to trust the Boulogne and Calais people, and prepares his ships for passing the Channel. He starts nearly at the third watch,—about midnight, we may presume. A portion of his army,—the cavalry,—encounter some little delay, such as has often occurred on the same spot since, even to travellers without horses. He himself got over to the British coast at about the fourth hour. This, at midsummer, would have been about a quarter past eight. As it was now late in the summer, it may have been nine o'clock in the morning when Cæsar found himself under the cliffs of Kent, and saw our armed ancestors standing along all the hills ready to meet him. He stayed at anchor, waiting for his ships, till about two P.M. His cavalry did not get across till four days afterwards. Having given his orders, and found a fitting moment and a fitting spot, Cæsar runs his ships up upon the beach.

Cæsar confesses to a good deal of difficulty in getting ashore. When we know how very hard it is to accomplish the same feat, on the same coast, in these days, with all the appliances of modern science to aid us, and, as we must presume, with no real intention on the part of the Cantii, or men of Kent, to oppose our landing, we can quite sympathise with Cæsar. The ships were so big that they could not be brought

into very shallow water. The Roman soldiers were compelled to jump into the sea, heavily armed, and there to fight with the waves and with the enemy. But the Britons, having the use of all their limbs, knowing the ground, standing either on the shore or just running into the shallows, made the landing uneasy enough. "Nostri,"—our men,—says Cæsar, with all these things against them, were not all of them so alert at fighting as was usual with them on dry ground; —at which no one can be surprised.

Cæsar had two kinds of ships—"naves longæ," long ships for carrying soldiers; and "naves onerariæ," ships for carrying burdens. The long ships do not seem to have been such ships of war as the Romans generally used in their sea-fights, but were handier, and more easily worked, than the transports. These he laid broadside to the shore, and harassed the poor natives with stones and arrows. Then the eagle-bearer of the tenth legion jumped into the sea, proclaiming that he, at any rate, would do his duty. Unless they wished to see their eagle fall into the hands of the enemy, they must follow him. "Jump down, he said, my fellow-soldiers, unless you wish to betray your eagle to the enemy. I at least will do my duty to the Republic and to our General. When he had said this with a loud voice, he threw himself out of the ship and advanced the eagle against the enemy." Seeing and hearing this, the men leaped forth freely, from that ship and from others. As usual, there was some sharp fighting. "Pugnatum est ab utrisque acriter." It is

nearly always the same thing. Cæsar throws away none of his glory by underrating his enemy. But at length the Britons fly. "This thing only was wanting to Cæsar's usual good fortune,"—that he was deficient in cavalry wherewith to ride on in pursuit, and "take the island!" Considering how very short a time he remains in the island, we feel that his complaint against fortune is hardly well founded. But there is a general surrender, and a claiming of hostages, and after a few days a sparkle of new hope in the breasts of the Britons. A storm arises, and Cæsar's ships are so knocked about that he does not know how he will get back to Gaul. He is troubled by a very high tide, not understanding the nature of these tides. As he had only intended this for a little tentative trip,—a mere taste of a future war with Britain,—he had brought no large supply of corn with him. He must get back, by hook or by crook. The Britons, seeing how it is with him, think that they can destroy him, and make an attempt to do so. The seventh legion is in great peril, having been sent out to find corn, but is rescued. Certain of his ships,—those which had been most grievously handled by the storm,—he breaks up, in order that he may mend the others with their materials. When we think how long it takes us to mend ships, having dockyards, and patent slips, and all things ready, this is most marvellous to us. But he does mend his ships, and while so doing he has a second fight with the Britons, and again repulses them. There is a burning and destroying of everything far and wide, a gathering of ambassadors to Cæsar asking

for terms, a demand for hostages,—a double number of hostages now,—whom Cæsar desired to have sent over to him to Gaul, because at this time of the year he did not choose to trust them to ships that were unseaworthy; and he himself, with all his army, gets back into the Boulogne and Calais country. Two transports only are missing, which are carried somewhat lower down the coast. There are but three hundred men in these transports, and these the Morini of those parts threaten to kill unless they will give up their arms. But Cæsar sends help, and even these three hundred are saved from disgrace. There is, of course, more burning of houses and laying waste of fields because of this little attempt, and then Cæsar puts his army into winter quarters.

What would have been the difference to the world if the Britons, as they surely might have done, had destroyed Cæsar and every Roman, and not left even a ship to get back to Gaul? In lieu of this Cæsar could send news to Rome of these various victories, and have a public thanksgiving decreed,—on this occasion for twenty days.

CHAPTER VI.

FIFTH BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR'S SECOND INVASION OF BRITAIN.—THE GAULS RISE AGAINST HIM.—B.C. 54.

On his return out of Britain, Cæsar, as usual, went over the Alps to look after his other provinces, and to attend to his business in Italy; but he was determined to make another raid upon the island. He could not yet assume that he had "taken it," and therefore he left minute instructions with his generals as to the building of more ships, and the repair of those which had been so nearly destroyed. He sends to Spain, he tells us, for the things necessary to equip his ships. We never hear of any difficulty about money. We know that he did obtain large grants from Rome for the support of his legions; but no scruple was made in making war maintain war, as far as such maintenance could be obtained. Cæsar personally was in an extremity of debt when he commenced his campaigns. He had borrowed an enormous sum, eight hundred and thirty talents, or something over £200,000, from Crassus,—who was specially the rich Roman of those days,—before he could take charge of his Spanish province. When his wars were over, he returned to Rome

with a great treasure; and indeed during these wars in Gaul he expended large sums in bribing Romans. We may suppose that he found hoards among the barbarians, as Lord Clive did in the East Indies. Clive contented himself with taking some: Cæsar probably took all.

Having given the order about his ships, he settled a little matter in Illyricum, taking care to raise some tribute there also. He allows but a dozen lines for recording this winter work, and then tells us that he hurried back to his army and his ships. His command had been so well obeyed in regard to vessels, that he finds ready, of that special sort which he had ordered with one bank of oars only on each side, as many as six hundred, and twenty-eight of the larger sort. He gives his soldiers very great credit for their exertions, and sends his fleet to the Portus Itius. The exact spot which Cæsar called by this name the geographers have not identified, but it is supposed to be between Boulogne and Calais. It may probably have been at Wissant. Having seen that things were thus ready for a second trip into Britain, he turns round and hurries off with four legions and eight hundred cavalry,—an army of 25,000 men,—into the Treves country. There is a quarrel going on there between two chieftains which it is well that he should settle,—somewhat as the monkey settled the contest about the oyster. This, however, is a mere nothing of an affair, and he is back again among his ships at the Portus Itius in a page and a half.

He resolves upon taking five legions of his own

soldiers into Britain, and two thousand mounted Gauls. He had brought together four thousand of these horsemen, collected from all Gaul, their chiefs and nobles, not only as fighting allies, but as hostages that the tribes should not rise in rebellion while his back was turned. These he divides, taking half with him, and leaving half with three legions of his own men, under Labienus, in the Boulogne country, as a base to his army, to look after the provisions, and to see that he be not harassed on his return. There is a little affair, however, with one of the Gaulish chieftains, Dumnorix the Æduan, who ought to have been his fastest friend. Dumnorix runs away with all the Æduan horsemen. Cæsar, however, sends after him and has him killed, and then all things are ready. He starts with altogether more than 800 ships at sunset, and comes over with a gentle south-west wind. He arrives off the coast of Britain at about noon, but can see none of the inhabitants on the cliff. He imagines that they have all fled, frightened by the number of his ships. Cæsar establishes his camp, and proceeds that same night about twelve miles into the country, —eleven miles, we may say, as our mile is longer than the Roman,—and there he finds the Britons. There is some fighting, after which Cæsar returns and fortifies his camp. Then there comes a storm and knocks his ships about terribly,—although he had found, as he thought, a nice soft place for them. But the tempest is very violent, and they are torn away from their anchors, and thrust upon the shore, and dashed against each other till there is infinite trouble. He is obliged

to send over to Labienus, telling him to build more ships; and those which are left he drags up over the shore to his camp, in spite of the enormous labour required in doing it. He is ten days at this work, night and day, and we may imagine that his soldiers had not an easy time of it. When this has been done, he advances again into the country after the enemy, and finds that Cassivellaunus is in command of the united forces of the different tribes. Cassivellaunus comes from the other side of the Thames, over in Middlesex or Hertfordshire. The Britons had not hitherto lived very peaceably together, but now they agree that against the Romans they will act in union under Cassivellaunus.

Cæsar's description of the island is very interesting. The interior is inhabited by natives, — or rather by "aborigines." Cæsar states this at least as the tradition of the country. But the maritime parts are held by Belgian immigrants, who, for the most part, have brought with them from the Continent the names of their tribes. The population is great, and the houses, built very like the houses in Gaul, are numerous and very thick together. The Britons have a great deal of cattle. They use money, having either copper coin or iron rings of a great weight. Tin is found in the middle of the island, and, about the coast, iron. But the quantity of iron found is small. Brass they import. They have the same timber as in Gaul,—only they have neither beech nor fir. Hares and chickens and geese they think it wrong to eat; but they keep these animals as pets. The climate, on the whole, is milder than in Gaul. The island is triangular. One

corner, that of Kent, has an eastern and a southern aspect. This southern side of the island he makes 500 miles, exceeding the truth by about 150 miles. Then Cæsar becomes a little hazy in his geography,—telling us that the other side, meaning the western line of the triangle, where Ireland lies, verges towards Spain. Ireland, he says, is half the size of Britain, and about the same distance from it that Britain is from Gaul. In the middle of the channel dividing Ireland from Britain there is an island called Mona,—the Isle of Man. There are also some other islands which at midwinter have thirty continuous days of night. Here Cæsar becomes not only hazy but mythic. But he explains that he has seen nothing of this himself, although he has ascertained, by scientific measurement, that the nights in Britain are shorter than on the Continent. Of course the nights are shorter with us in summer than they are in Italy, and longer in winter. The western coast he makes out to be 700 miles long; in saying which he is nearly 100 miles over the mark. The third side he describes as looking towards the north. He means the eastern coast. This he calls 800 miles long, and exaggerates our territories by more than 200 miles. The marvel, however, is that he should be so near the truth. The men of Kent are the most civilised: indeed they are almost as good as Gauls in this respect! What changes does not time make in the comparative merits of countries! The men in the interior live on flesh and milk, and do not care for corn. They wear skin clothing. They make themselves horrible with woad, and go about with very long hair.

They shave close, except the head and upper lip. Then comes the worst habit of all;—ten or a dozen men have their wives in common between them.

We have a very vivid and by no means unflattering account of the singular agility of our ancestors in their mode of fighting from their chariots. "This," says Cæsar, "is the nature of their chariot-fighting. They first drive rapidly about the battle-field,—"per omnes partes,"—and throw their darts, and frequently disorder the ranks by the very terror occasioned by the horses and by the noise of the wheels; and when they have made their way through the bodies of the cavalry, they jump down and fight on foot. Then the charioteers go a little out of the battle, and so place their chariots that they may have a ready mode of returning should their friends be pressed by the number of their enemies. Thus they unite the rapidity of cavalry and the stability of infantry; and so effective do they become by daily use and practice, that they are accustomed to keep their horses, excited as they are, on their legs on steep and precipitous ground, and to manage and turn them very quickly, and to run along the pole and stand upon the yoke,"—by which the horses were held together at the collars,—"and again with the greatest rapidity to return to the chariot."* All which is very wonderful.

Of course there is a great deal of fighting, and the

* All well-instructed modern Britons have learned from the old authorities that the Briton war-chariots were furnished with scythes attached to the axles,—from Pomponius Mela, the Roman geographer, and from Mrs Markham, among others. And Eugene Sue, in his novel translated into English under the name of the 'Rival Races,' explains how the Bretons on the other side of

Britons soon learn by experience to avoid general engagements and maintain guerilla actions. Cæsar by degrees makes his way to the Thames, and with great difficulty gets his army over it. He can only do this at one place, and that badly. The site of this ford he does not describe to us. It is supposed to have been near the place which we now know as Sunbury. He does tell us that his men were so deep in the water that their heads only were above the stream. But even thus they were so impetuous in their onslaught, that the Britons would not wait for them on the opposite bank, but ran away. Soon there come unconditional surrender, and hostages, and promises of tribute. Cassivellaunus, who is himself but a usurper, and therefore has many enemies at home, endeavours to make himself secure in a strong place or town, which is supposed to have been on or near the site of our St Albans. Cæsar, however, explains that the poor Britons give the name of a town,—"oppidum," —to a spot in which they have merely surrounded some thick woods with a ditch and rampart. Cæsar, of course, drives them out of their woodland fortress, and then there quickly follows another surrender, more hostages, and the demand for tribute. Cæsar leaves his orders behind him, as though to speak were to be obeyed. One Mandubratius, and not Cassivellaunus,

the water, in the Morbihan, used these scythes; and how, before a battle with Cæsar's legions, the wives of the warriors arranged the straps so that the scythes might be worked from the chariot like oars from a boat. But Cæsar says nothing of such scythes, and surely he would have done so had he seen them. The reader must choose between Cæsar's silence and the authority of Pomponius Mela, Mrs Markham, and Eugene Sue.

is to be the future king in Middlesex and Hertfordshire,—that is, over the Trinobantes who live there. He fixes the amount of tribute to be sent annually by the Britons to Rome; and he especially leaves orders that Cassivellaunus shall do no mischief to the young Mandubratius. Then he crosses back into Gaul at two trips,—his ships taking half the army first and coming back for the other half; and he piously observes that though he had lost many ships when they were comparatively empty, hardly one had been destroyed while his soldiers were in them.

So was ended Cæsar's second and last invasion of Britain. That he had reduced Britain as he had reduced Gaul he certainly could not boast;—though Quintus Cicero had written to his brother to say that Britannia was,—"confecta,"—finished. Though he had twice landed his army under the white cliffs, and twice taken it away with comparative security, he had on both occasions been made to feel how terribly strong an ally to the Britons was that channel which divided them from the Continent. The reader is made to feel that on both occasions the existence of his army and of himself is in the greatest peril. Cæsar's idea in attacking Britain was probably rather that of making the Gauls believe that his power could reach even beyond them,—could extend itself all round them, even into distant islands,—than of absolutely establishing the Roman dominion beyond that distant sea. The Britons had helped the Gauls in their wars with him, and it was necessary that he should punish any who presumed to give such help. Whether the orders which

he left behind him were obeyed we do not know; but we may imagine that the tribute exacted was not sent to Rome with great punctuality. In fact, Cæsar invaded the island twice, but did not reduce it.

On his return to Gaul, nearly at the close of the summer, he found himself obliged to distribute his army about the country because of a great scarcity of provisions. There had been a drought, and the crops had failed. Hitherto he had kept his army together during the winter; now he was obliged to divide his legions, placing one with one tribe, and another with another. A legion and a half he stations under two of his generals, L. Titurius Sabinus, and L. Aurunculeius Cotta, among the Eburones, who live on the banks of the Meuse in the Liege and Namur country,—a very stout people, who are still much averse to the dominion of Rome. In this way he thought he might best get over that difficulty as to the scarcity of provisions; but yet he so well understood the danger of separating his army, that he is careful to tell us that, with the exception of one legion which he had stationed in a very quiet country,—among the Essui, where Alençon now stands,—they were all within a hundred miles of each other. Nevertheless, in spite of this precaution, there now fell upon Cæsar the greatest calamity which he had ever yet suffered in war.

During all these campaigns, the desire of the Gauls to free themselves from the power and the tyranny of Rome never ceased; nor did their intention to do so ever fade away. Cæsar must have been to them as a venomous blight, or some evil divinity sent to afflict them for causes which they could not understand.

There were tribes who truckled to him, but he had no real friends among them. If any Gauls could have loved him, the Ædui should have done so; but that Dumnorix, the Æduan, who ran away with the horsemen of his tribe when he was wanted to help in the invasion of Britain, had, before he was killed, tried to defend himself, asserting vociferously that he was a free man and belonging to a free state. He had failed to understand that, in being admitted to the alliance of Cæsar, he was bound to obey Cæsar. Cæsar speaks of it all with his godlike simplicity, as though he saw nothing ungodlike in the work he was doing. There was no touch of remorse in him, as he ordered men to be slaughtered and villages to be burned. He was able to look at those things as trifles,—as parts of a great whole. He felt no more than does the gentleman who sends the sheep out of his park to be slaughtered at the appointed time. When he seems to be most cruel, it is for the sake of example,—that some politic result may follow,—that Gauls may know, and Italians know also, that they must bow the knee to Cæsar. But the heart of the reader is made to bleed as he sees the unavailing struggles of the tribes. One does not specially love the Ædui; but Dumnorix protesting that he will not return, that he is a free man, of a free state, and then being killed, is a man to be loved. Among the Carnutes, where Chartres now stands, Cæsar has set up a pet king, one Tasgetius; but when Cæsar is away in Britain, the Carnutes kill Tasgetius. They will have no pet of Cæsar's. And now the stout Eburones, who have two kings of their own over them, Ambiorix and Cativolcus, understanding that Cæsar's dif-

ficulty is their opportunity, attack the Roman camp, with its legion and a half of men under Titurius and Cotta.

Ambiorix, the chieftain, is very crafty. He persuades the Roman generals to send ambassadors to him, and to these he tells his story. He himself, Ambiorix, loves Cæsar beyond all things. Has not Cæsar done him great kindnesses? He would not willingly lift a hand against Cæsar, but he cannot control his state. The facts, however, are thus; an enormous body of Germans has crossed the Rhine, and is hurrying on to destroy that Roman camp; and it certainly will be destroyed, so great is the number of the Germans. Thus says Ambiorix; and then suggests whether it would not be well that Titurius and Cotta with their nine or ten thousand men,—a mere handful of men against all these Germans who are already over the Rhine;—would it not be well that the Romans should go and join some of their brethren, either the legion that is among the Nervii to the east, under Quintus Cicero, the brother of the great orator—or that other legion which Labienus has, a little to the south, on the borders of the Remi and Treviri? And in regard to a good turn on his own part, so great is the love and veneration which he, Ambiorix, feels for Cæsar, that he is quite ready to see the Romans safe through the territories of the Eburones. He begs Titurius and Cotta to think of this, and to allow him to aid them in their escape while escape is possible. The two Roman generals do think of it. Titurius thinks that it will be well to take the advice of Ambiorix. Cotta, and with him many of the tribunes and centurions of the soldiers, think that they should not stir without Cæsar's orders;—

think also that there is nothing baser or more foolish in warfare than to act on advice given by an enemy. Titurius, however, is clear for going, and Cotta, after much argument and some invective, gives way. Early on the next morning they all leave their camp, taking with them their baggage, and marching forth as though through a friendly country,—apparently with belief in the proffered friendship of Ambiorix. The Eburones had of course prepared an ambush, and the Roman army is attacked both behind and before, and is thrown into utter confusion.

The legion, or legion and a half, with its two commanders, is altogether destroyed. Titurius goes out from his ranks to meet Ambiorix, and pray for peace. He is told to throw away his arms, and submitting to the disgrace, casts them down. Then, while Ambiorix is making a long speech, the Roman general is surrounded and slaughtered. Cotta is killed fighting; as also are more than half the soldiers. The rest get back into the camp at night, and then, despairing of any safety, overwhelmed with disgrace, conscious that there is no place for hope, they destroy themselves. Only a few have escaped during the fighting to tell the tale in the camp of Labienus.

As a rule the reader's sympathies are with the Gauls; but we cannot help feeling a certain regret that a Roman legion should have thus been wiled on to destruction through the weakness of its general. If Titurius could have been made to suffer alone we should bear it better. When we are told how the gallant eagle-bearer, Petrosidius, throws his eagle into the rampart, and then dies fighting before the camp, we wish

that Ambiorix had been less successful. Of this, however, we feel quite certain, that there will come a day, and that soon, in which Cæsar will exact punishment.

Having done so much, Ambiorix and the Eburones do not desist. Now, if ever, after so great a disgrace, and with legions still scattered, may Cæsar be worsted. Q. Cicero is with his legion among the Nervii, and thither Ambiorix goes. The Nervii are quite ready, and Cicero is attacked in his camp. And here, too, for a long while it goes very badly with the Romans;—so badly that Cicero is hardly able to hold his ramparts against the attacks made upon them by the barbarians. Red-hot balls of clay and hot arrows are thrown into the camp, and there is a fire. The messengers sent to Cæsar for help are slain on the road, and the Romans begin to think that there is hardly a chance for them of escape. Unless Cæsar be with them they are not safe. All their power, their prestige, their certainty of conquest, lies in Cæsar. Cicero behaves like a prudent and a valiant man; but unless he had at last succeeded in getting a Gaulish slave to take a letter concealed in a dart to Cæsar, the enemy would have destroyed him.

There is a little episode of two Roman centurions, Pulfius and Varenus, who were always quarrelling as to which was the better man of the two. Pulfius with much bravado rushes out among the enemy, and Varenus follows him. Pulfius gets into trouble, and Varenus rescues him. Then Varenus is in a difficulty, and Pulfius comes to his assistance. According to all chances of war, both should have been killed; but both get back safe into the camp;—and nobody knows from that day to this which was the better man.

Cæsar, of course, hastens to the assistance of his lieutenant, having sent word of his coming by a letter fastened to another dart, which, however, hardly reaches Cicero in time to comfort him before he sees the fires by which the coming legions wasted the country along their line of march. Then there is more fighting. Cæsar conquers, and Q. Cicero is rescued from his very disagreeable position. Labienus has also been in difficulty, stationed, as we remember, on the borders of the Treviri. The Treviri were quite as eager to attack him as the Eburones and Nervii to destroy the legions left in their territories. But before the attack is made, the news of Cæsar's victory, travelling with wonderful speed, is heard of in those parts, and the Treviri think it best to leave Labienus alone.

But Cæsar has perceived that, although he has so often boasted that all Gaul was at last at peace, all Gaul is prepared to carry on the war against him. It is during this winter that he seems to realise a conviction that his presence in the country is not popular with the Gauls in general, and that he has still much to do before he can make them understand that they are not free men, belonging to free states. The opposition to him has become so general that he himself determines to remain in Gaul all the winter; and even after telling us of the destruction of Indutiomarus, the chief of the Treviri, by Labienus, he can only boast that—"Cæsar had, after that was done, Gaul a little quieter,"—a little more like a subject country bound hand and foot, —than it was before. During this year Cæsar's proconsular power over his provinces was extended for a second period of five years.

CHAPTER VII.

SIXTH BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—CÆSAR PURSUES AMBIORIX.—THE MANNERS OF THE GAULS AND OF THE GERMANS ARE CONTRASTED.—B.C. 53.

CÆSAR begins the next campaign before the winter is over, having, as we have seen, been forced to continue the last long after the winter had commenced. The Gauls were learning to unite themselves, and things were becoming very serious with him. One Roman army, with probably ten thousand men, had been absolutely destroyed, with its generals Titurius Sabinus and Aurunculeius Cotta. Another under Quintus Cicero would have suffered the same fate, but for Cæsar's happy intervention. A third under Labienus had been attacked. All Gaul had been under arms, or thinking of arms, in the autumn; and though Cæsar had been able to report at the end of the campaign that Gaul,—his Gaul, as he intended that it should be,—was a little quieter, nevertheless he understood well that he still had his work to do before he could enter upon possession. He had already been the master of eight legions in Gaul, containing 48,000 foot-soldiers, levied on the Italian side of the Alps. He

had added to this a large body of Gaulish cavalry and light infantry, over and above his eight legions. He had now lost an entire legion and a half, besides the gaps which must have been made in Britain, and by the loss of those who had fallen when attacked under Cicero by the Nervii. But he would show the Gauls that when so treated he could begin again, not only with renewed but with increased force. He would astound them by his display of Roman power, "thinking that, for the future, it would greatly affect the opinion of Gaul that the power of Italy should be seen to be so great that, if any reverse in war were suffered, not only could the injury be cured in a short time, but that the loss could be repaired even by increased forces." He not only levies fresh troops, but borrows a legion which Pompey commands outside the walls of Rome. He tells us that Pompey yields his legion to the "Republic and to Friendship." The Triumvirate was still existing, and Cæsar's great colleague probably felt that he had no alternative. In this way Cæsar not only re-established the legion which had been annihilated, but completes the others, and takes the field with two new legions added to his army. He probably now had as many as eighty thousand men under his command.

He first makes a raid against our old friends the Nervii, who had nearly conquered Cicero before Christmas, and who were already conspiring again with certain German and neighbouring Belgian tribes. The reader will perhaps remember that in the second book this tribe was said to have been so utterly de-

stroyed that hardly their name remained. That, no doubt, was Cæsar's belief after the great slaughter. There had been, however, enough of them left nearly to destroy Q. Cicero and his legion. Then Cæsar goes to Paris,—Lutetia Parisiorum, of which we now hear for the first time,—and, with the help of his friends the Ædui and the Remi, makes a peace with the centre tribes of Gaul, the Senones and Carnutes. Then he resolves upon attacking Ambiorix with all his heart and soul. Ambiorix had destroyed his legion and killed his two generals, and against Ambiorix he must put forth all his force. It is said that when Cæsar first heard of that misfortune he swore that he would not cut his hair or shave himself till he was avenged. But he feels that he must first dispose of those who would naturally be the allies of this much-to-be-persecuted enemy. The Menapii, with whom we may remember that he had never quite settled matters in his former war, and who live on the southern banks of the Meuse not far from the sea, have not even yet sent to him messengers to ask for peace. He burns their villages, takes their cattle, makes slaves of the men, and then binds them by hostages to have no friendship with Ambiorix. In the mean time Labienus utterly defeats the great north-eastern tribe, the Treviri, whom he cunningly allures into fighting just before they are joined by certain Germans who are coming to aid them. "Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat." These unfortunate Gauls and Germans fall into every trap that is laid for them. The speech which Cæsar quotes

as having been made by Labienus to his troops on this occasion is memorable. "Now," says Labienus, "you have your opportunity. You have got your enemy thoroughly at advantage. That valour which you have so often displayed before the 'Imperator,' Cæsar, display now under my command. Think that Cæsar is present, and that he beholds you." To have written thus of himself Cæsar must have thought of himself as of a god. He tells the story as though it were quite natural that Labienus and the soldiers should so regard him.

After this battle, in which the Treviri are of course slaughtered, Cæsar makes a second bridge over the Rhine, somewhat above the spot at which he had crossed before. He does this, he says, for two reasons, —first, because the Germans had sent assistance to the Nervii; and secondly, lest his great enemy Ambiorix should find shelter among the Suevi. Then he suggests that the opportunity is a good one for saying something to his readers of the different manners of Gaul and of Germany. Among the Gauls, in their tribes, their villages, and even in their families, there are ever two factions, so that one should always balance the other, and neither become superior. Cæsar so tells us at this particular point of his narrative, because he is anxious to go back and explain how it was that he had taken the part of the Ædui, and had first come into conflict with the Germans, driving Ariovistus back across the Rhine for their sake. In eastern Gaul two tribes had long balanced each other, each, of course, striving for mastery,—the Ædui and

the Sequani. The Sequani had called in the aid of the Germans, and the Ædui had been very hardly treated. In their sufferings they had appealed to Rome, having had former relations of close amity with the Republic. Divitiacus, their chief magistrate,—the brother of Dumnorix who was afterwards killed by Cæsar's order for running away with the Æduan cavalry before the second invasion of Britain,—had lived for a while in Rome, and had enjoyed Roman friendships, that of Cicero among others. There was a good deal of doubt in Rome as to what should be done with these Ædui; but at last, as we know, Cæsar decided on taking their part; and we know also how he drove Ariovistus back into Germany, with the loss of his wives and daughters. Thus it came to pass, Cæsar tells us, that the Ædui were accounted first of all the Gauls in regard to friendship with Rome; while the Remi, who came to his assistance so readily when the Belgians were in arms against him, were allowed the second place.

Among the Gauls there are, he says, two classes of men held in honour,—the Druids and the knights; by which we understand that two professions or modes of life, and two only, were open to the nobility,—the priesthood and the army. All the common people, Cæsar says, are serfs, or little better. They do not hesitate, when oppressed by debt or taxation, or the fear of some powerful enemy, to give themselves into slavery, loving the protection so obtained. The Druids have the chief political authority, and can maintain it by the dreadful power of excommunication. The excom-

municated wretch is an outlaw, beyond the pale of civil rights. Over the Druids is one great Druid, at whose death the place is filled by election among all the Druids, unless there be one so conspicuously first that no ceremony of election is needed. Their most sacred spot for worship is among the Carnutes, in the middle of the country. Their discipline and mysteries came to them from Britain, and when any very knotty point arises they go to Britain to make inquiry. The Druids don't fight, and pay no taxes. The ambition to be a Druid is very great; but then so is the difficulty. Twenty years of tuition is not uncommonly needed; for everything has to be learned by heart. Of their religious secrets nothing may be written. Their great doctrine is the transmigration of souls; so that men should believe that the soul never dies, and that death, therefore, or that partial death which we see, need not be feared. They are great also in astronomy, geography, natural history,—and general theology, of course.

The knights, or nobles, have no resource but to fight. Cæsar suggests that before the blessing of his advent they were driven to the disagreeable necessity of fighting yearly with each other. Of all people the Gauls, he says, are the most given to superstition; in so much so, that in all dangers and difficulties they have recourse to human sacrifices, in which the Druids are their ministers. They burn their victims to appease their deities, and, by preference, will burn thieves and murderers,—the gods loving best such polluted victims,—but, in default of such, will have

recourse to an immolation of innocents. Then Cæsar tells us that among the gods they chiefly worship Mercury, whom they seem to have regarded as the cleverest of the gods; but they also worship Apollo, Mars, Jove, and Minerva, ascribing to them the attributes which are allowed them by other nations. How the worship of the Greek and Roman gods became mingled with the religion of the Druids we are not told, nor does Cæsar express surprise that it should have been so. Cæsar gives the Roman names of these gods, but he does not intend us to understand that they were so called by the Gauls, who had their own names for their deities. The trophies of war they devote to Mars, and in many states keep large stores of such consecrated spoils. It is not often that a Gaul will commit the sacrilege of appropriating to his own use anything thus made sacred; but the punishment of such offence, when it is committed, is death by torture. There is the greatest veneration from sons to their fathers. Until the son can bear arms he does not approach his father, or even stand in public in his presence. The husband's fortune is made to equal the wife's dowry, and then the property is common between them. This seems well enough, and the law would suit the views of British wives of the present day. But the next Gaulish custom is not so well worthy of example. Husbands have the power of life and death over their wives and children; and when any man of mark dies, if there be cause for suspicion, his wives are examined under torture, and if any evil practice be confessed, they

are then tortured to death. We learn from this passage that polygamy was allowed among the Gauls. The Gauls have grand funerals. Things which have been dear to the departed are burned at these ceremonies. Animals were thus burned in Cæsar's time, but in former days slaves also, and dependants who had been specially loved. The best-governed states are very particular in not allowing rumours as to state affairs to be made matter of public discussion. Anything heard is to be told to the magistrate; but there is to be no discussion on public affairs except in the public council. So much we hear of the customs of the Gauls.

The Germans differ from the Gauls in many things. They know nothing of Druids, nor do they care for sacrifices. They worship only what they see and enjoy,—the sun, and fire, and the moon. They spend their time in hunting and war, and care little for agriculture. They live on milk, cheese, and flesh. They are communists as to the soil, and stay no longer than a year on the same land. These customs they follow lest they should learn to prefer agriculture to war; lest they should grow fond of broad possessions, so that the rich should oppress the poor; lest they should by too much comfort become afraid of cold and heat; lest the love of money should grow among them, and one man should seek to be higher than another. From all which it seems that the Germans were not without advanced ideas in political economy.

It is a great point with the Germans to have no near neighbours. For the sake of safety and inde-

pendence, each tribe loves to have a wide margin. In war the chieftains have power of life and death. In time of peace there are no appointed magistrates, but the chiefs in the cantons declare justice and quell litigation as well as they can. Thieving in a neighbouring state,—not in his own,—is honourable to a German. Expeditions for thieving are formed, which men may join or not as they please; but woe betide him who, having promised, fails. They are good to travelling strangers. There was a time when the Gauls were better men than the Germans, and could come into Germany and take German land. Even now, says Cæsar, there are Gaulish tribes living in Germany after German fashion. But the nearness of the Province to Gaul has taught the Gauls luxury, and so it has come to pass that the Gauls are not as good in battle as they used to be. It is interesting to gather from all these notices the progress of civilisation through the peoples of Europe, and some hint as to what has been thought to be good and bad for humanity by various races before the time of Christ.

Cæsar then tells us of a great Hercynian forest, beginning from the north of Switzerland and stretching away to the Danube. A man in nine days would traverse its breadth; but even in sixty days a man could not get to the end of it lengthwise. We may presume that the Black Forest was a portion of it. It contains many singular beasts,—bisons with one horn; elks, which are like great stags, but which have no joints in their legs, and cannot lie down,—nor, if

knocked down, can they get up,—which sleep leaning against trees; but the trees sometimes break, and then the elk falls and has a bad time of it. Then there is the urus, almost as big as an elephant, which spares neither man nor beast. It is a great thing to kill a urus, but no one can tame them, even when young. The Germans are fond of mounting the horns of this animal with silver, and using them for drinking-cups.

Cæsar does very little over among the Germans. He comes back, partly destroys his bridge, and starts again in search of Ambiorix. His lieutenant Basilus nearly takes the poor hunted chieftain, but Ambiorix escapes, and Cæsar moralises about fortune. Ambiorix, the reader will remember, was joint-king over the Eburones with one Cativolcus. Cativolcus, who is old, finding how his people are harassed, curses his brother king who has brought these sorrows on the nation, and poisons himself with the juice of yew-tree.

All the tribes in the Belgic country, Gauls as well as Germans, were now very much harassed. They all had helped, or might have helped, or, if left to themselves, might at some future time give help to Ambiorix and the Eburones. Cæsar divides his army, but still goes himself in quest of his victim into the damp, uncomfortable countries near the mouths of the Scheldt and Meuse. Here he is much distracted between his burning desire to extirpate that race of wicked men over whom Ambiorix had been king, and his anxiety lest he should lose more of his own men in the work

than the wicked race is worth. He invites the neighbouring Gauls to help him in the work, so that Gauls should perish in those inhospitable regions rather than his own legionaries. This, however, is fixed in his mind, that a tribe which has been guilty of so terrible an offence,—which has destroyed in war an army of his, just as he would have delighted to destroy a Gaulish army,—must be extirpated, so that its very name may cease to exist! "Pro tali facinore, stirps ac nomen civitatis tollatur."

Cæsar, in dividing his army, had stationed Q. Cicero with one legion and the heavy baggage and spoils of the army, in a fortress exactly at that spot from which Titurius Sabinus had been lured by the craft of Ambiorix. Certain Germans, the Sigambri, having learned that all the property of the Eburones had been given up by Cæsar as a prey to any who would take it, had crossed the Rhine that they might thus fill their hands. But it is suggested to them that they may fill their hands much fuller by attacking Q. Cicero in his camp; and they do attack him, when the best part of his army is away looking for provisions. That special spot in the territory of the Eburones is again nearly fatal to a Roman legion. But the Germans, not knowing how to press the advantage they gain, return with their spoil across the Rhine, and Cæsar again comes up like a god. But he has not as yet destroyed Ambiorix,—who indeed is not taken at last,—and expresses his great disgust and amazement that the coming of these Germans, which was planned with the view of injuring Ambiorix,

should have done instead so great a service to that monstrously wicked chieftain.

He does his very best to catch Ambiorix in person, offering great rewards and inducing his men to undergo all manner of hardships in the pursuit. Ambiorix, however, with three or four chosen followers, escapes him. But Cæsar is not without revenge. He burns all the villages of the Eburones, and all their houses. He so lays waste the country that even when his army is gone not a soul should be able to live there. After that he probably allowed himself to be shaved. Ambiorix is seen here and is seen there, but with hair-breadth chances eludes his pursuer. Cæsar, having thus failed, returns south, as winter approaches, to Rheims,—Durocortorum; and just telling us in four words how he had one Acco tortured to death because Acco had headed a conspiracy in the middle of Gaul among the Carnutes and Senones, and how he outlawed and banished others whom he could not catch, he puts his legions into winter quarters, and again goes back to Italy to hold assizes and look after his interests amid the great affairs of the Republic.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEVENTH BOOK OF THE WAR IN GAUL.—THE REVOLT OF VERCINGETORIX.—B.C. 52.

In opening his account of his seventh campaign Cæsar makes almost the only reference to the affairs of Rome which we find in these memoirs. Clodius has been murdered. We know, too, that Crassus had been killed at the head of his army in the east, and that, at the death of Clodius, Pompey had been created Dictator in the city with the name of sole Consul. Cæsar, however, only mentions the murder of Clodius, and then goes on to say that the Gauls, knowing how important to him must be the affairs of Rome at this moment, think that he cannot now attend to them, and that, in his absence, they may shake off the Roman yoke. The affairs of Rome must indeed have been important to Cæsar, if as no doubt is true, he had already before his eyes a settled course of action by which to make himself supreme in the Republic. Clodius, the demagogue, was dead, whom he never could have loved, but whom it had not suited him to treat as an enemy. Crassus, too, was dead, whom, on account of his wealth, Cæsar had admitted as a colleague. Pompey, the third triumvir,

remained at Rome, and was now sole Consul; Pompey who, only twelve months since, had so fondly given up his legion for the sake of the Republic,—and for friendship. Cæsar, no doubt, foresaw by this time that the struggle must be at last between himself and Pompey. The very forms of the old republican rule were being turned adrift, and Cæsar must have known, as Pompey also knew, and Clodius had known, and even Crassus, that a new power would become paramount in the city. But the hands to wrest such power must be very strong. And the day had not yet quite come. Having spent six summers in subduing Gaul, Cæsar would not lose the prestige, the power, the support, which such a territory, really subdued, would give him. Things, doubtless, were important at Rome, but it was still his most politic course to return over the Alps and complete his work. Before the winter was over he heard that the tribes were conspiring, because it was thought that at such an emergency Cæsar could not leave Italy.

This last book of the Commentary, as written by Cæsar, tells the story of the gallant Vercingetorix, one of the Arverni,—the modern Auvergne,—whose father, Celtillus, is said to have sought the chieftainship of all Gaul, and to have been killed on that account by his own state. Vercingetorix is certainly the hero of these wars on the Gaulish side, though we hear nothing of him till this seventh campaign. The conspiracy against Rome is afloat, the Carnutes, whose chief town is Genabum,—Orleans,—having commenced it. Vercingetorix excites his own countrymen to join, but is expelled from

their town, Gergovia, for the attempt. The Arverni, or at least their chief men, fear to oppose the Romans; but Vercingetorix obtains a crowd of followers out in the country, and perseveres. Men of other tribes come to him, from as far north as Paris, and west from the Ocean. He assumes supreme power, and enacts and carries out most severe laws for his guidance during the war. For any greater offence he burns the offender alive and subjects him to all kinds of torments. For any small fault he cuts off a man's ears, pokes out one of his eyes, and sends him home, that he may be an example visible to all men. By threats of such punishment to those who do not join him, and by inflicting such on those who do and are then untrue to him or lukewarm, he gets together a great army. Cæsar, who is still in Italy, hears of all this, and having made things comfortable with Pompey, hurries into the province. He tells us of his great difficulty in joining his army,—of the necessity which is incumbent on him of securing even the Roman Province from invasion, and of the manner in which he breaks through snow-clad mountains, the Cevennes, at a time of the year in which such mountains were supposed to be impassable. He is forced into fighting before the winter is over, because, unless he does so, the few friends he has in Gaul, —the Ædui, for instance,—will have been gained over by the enemy. This made it very difficult, Cæsar tells us, for him to know what to do; but he decides that he must begin his campaign, though it be winter still.

Cæsar, moving his army about with wonderful quickness, takes three towns in the centre of Gaul, of which

Genabum, Orleans, is the first, and thus provides himself with food. Vercingetorix, when he hears of these losses, greatly troubled in his mind that Cæsar should thus be enabled to exist on the provisions gathered by the Gauls, determines to burn all the Gaulish towns in those parts. He tells his people that there is nothing else for them in their present emergency, and that they must remember when they see their hearths smoking and their property destroyed, that it would be, or ought to be, much more grievous for them to know that their wives and children would become slaves, as undoubtedly would be their fate, if Cæsar were allowed to prevail. The order is given. Twenty cities belonging to one tribe are burned to the ground. The same thing is done in other states. But there is one very beautiful city, the glory of the country round, which can, they say, be so easily defended that it will be a comfort rather than a peril to them. Avaricum, the present Bourges,—must that also be burned? May not Avaricum be spared? Vercingetorix is all for burning Avaricum as he has burned the others; but he allows himself to be persuaded, and the city is spared—for the time.

Cæsar, of course, determines to take Avaricum; but he encounters great difficulties. The cattle have been driven away. There is no corn. Those wretched Ædui do almost nothing for him; and the Boii, who are their neighbours, and who, at the best, are but a poor scanty people, are equally unserviceable. Some days his army is absolutely without food; but yet no word of complaint is heard "unworthy of the majesty

and former victories of the Roman people." The soldiers even beg him to continue the siege when he offers to raise it because of the hardships they are enduring. Let them endure anything, they say, but failure! "Moreover Cæsar, when he would accost his legions one by one at their work, and would tell them that he would raise the siege if they could but ill bear their privations, was implored by all of them not to do that. They said that for many years under his command they had so well done their duty that they had undergone no disgrace, had never quitted their ground leaving aught unfinished,"—except the subjugation of Britain they might perhaps have said,—"that they would be now disgraced if they should raise a siege which had been commenced; that they would rather bear all hardships than not avenge the Roman citizens who had perished at Genabum by the perfidy of the Gauls." Cæsar puts these words into the mouths of his legionaries, and as we read them we believe that such was the existing spirit of the men. Cæsar's soldiers now had learned better than to cry because they were afraid of their enemies.

Then we hear that Vercingetorix is in trouble with the Gauls. The Gauls, when they see the Romans so near them, think that they are to be betrayed into Cæsar's hands, and they accuse their leader. But Vercingetorix makes them a speech, and brings up certain Roman prisoners to give evidence as to the evil condition of the Roman army. Vercingetorix swears that these prisoners are soldiers from the Roman legions, and so settles that little trouble; but Cæsar,

defending his legionaries, asserts that the men so used were simply slaves.

Vercingetorix is in his camp at some little distance from Avaricum, while Cæsar is determined to take the city. We have the description of the siege, concise, graphic, and clear. We are told of the nature of the walls; how the Gauls were good at mining and countermining; how they flung hot pitch and boiling grease on the invaders; how this was kept up, one Gaul after another stepping on to the body of his dying comrade; how at last they resolved to quit the town and make their way by night to the camp of Vercingetorix, but were stopped by the prayers of their own women, who feared Cæsar's mercies;—and how at last the city was taken. We cannot but execrate Cæsar when he tells us coolly of the result. They were all killed. The old, the women, and the children, perished altogether, slaughtered by the Romans. Out of forty thousand inhabitants, Cæsar says that about eight hundred got safely to Vercingetorix. Of course we doubt the accuracy of Cæsar's figures when he tells us of the numbers of the Gauls; but we do not doubt that but a few escaped, and that all but a few were slaughtered. When, during the last campaign, the Gauls at Genabum (Orleans) had determined on revolt against Cæsar, certain Roman traders—usurers for the most part, who had there established themselves—were killed. Cæsar gives this as the cause, and sufficient cause, for the wholesale slaughter of women and children! One reflects that not otherwise, perhaps, could he have conquered Gaul, and that Gaul

had to be conquered; but we cannot for the moment but abhor the man capable of such work. Vercingetorix bears his loss bravely. He reminds the Gauls that had they taken his advice the city would have been destroyed by themselves and not defended; he tells them that all the states of Gaul are now ready to join him; and he prepares to fortify a camp after the Roman fashion. Hitherto the Gauls have fought either from behind the walls of towns, or out in the open country without other protection than that of the woods and hills.

Then there is another episode with those unsatisfactory Ædui. There is a quarrel among them who shall be their chief magistrate,—a certain old man or a certain young man,—and they send to Cæsar to settle the question. Cæsar's hands are very full; but, as he explains, it is essential to him that his allies shall be kept in due subordinate order. He therefore absolutely goes in person to one of their cities, and decides that the young man shall be the chief magistrate. But, as he seldom does anything for nothing, he begs that ten thousand Æduan infantry and all the Æduan cavalry may be sent to help him against Vercingetorix. The Ædui have no alternative but to comply. Their compliance, however, is not altogether of a friendly nature. The old man who has been put out of the magistracy gets hold of the Æduan general of the forces; and the Æduan army takes the field,—to help, not Cæsar, but Vercingetorix! There is a large amount of lying and treachery among the Ædui, and of course tidings of what is going on are carried to Cæsar. Over

and over again these people deceive him, betray him, and endeavour to injure his cause; but he always forgives them, or pretends to forgive them. It is his policy to show to the Gauls how great can be the friendship and clemency of Cæsar. If he would have burned the Ædui and spared Bourges we should have liked him better; but then, had he done so, he would not have been Cæsar.

While Cæsar is thus troubled with his allies, he has trouble enough also with his enemies. Vercingetorix, with his followers, after that terrible reverse at Avaricum,—Bourges,—goes into his own country which we know as Auvergne, and there encamps his army on a high hill with a flat top, called Gergovia. All of us who have visited Clermont have probably seen the hill. Vercingetorix makes three camps for his army on the hill, and the Arverni have a town there. The Gaul has so placed himself that there shall be a river not capable of being forded between himself and Cæsar. But the Roman general makes a bridge and sets himself down with his legions before Gergovia. The limits of this little work do not admit of any detailed description of Cæsar's battles; but perhaps there is none more interesting than this siege. The three Gaulish camps are taken. The women of Gergovia, thinking that their town is taken also, leaning over the walls, implore mercy from the Romans, and beg that they may not be treated as have the women of Avaricum. Certain leading Roman soldiers absolutely climb up into the town. The reader also thinks that Cæsar is to prevail, as he always does prevail. But he is beaten back, and

has to give it up. On this occasion the gallant Vercingetorix is the master of the day, and Cæsar excuses himself by explaining how it was that his legions were defeated through the rash courage of his own men, and not by bad generalship of his own. And it probably was so. The reader always feels inclined to believe the Commentary, even when he may most dislike Cæsar. Cæsar again makes his bridge over the river, the Allier, and retires into the territory of his doubtful friends the Ædui. He tells us himself that in that affair he lost 700 men and 46 officers.

It seems that at this time Cæsar with his whole army must have been in great danger of being destroyed by the Gauls. Why Vercingetorix did not follow up his victory and prevent Cæsar from escaping over the Allier is not explained. No doubt the requirements of warfare were not known to the Gaul as they were to the Roman. As it was, Cæsar had enough to do to save his army. The Ædui, of course, turned against him again. All his stores and treasure and baggage were at Noviodunum,—Nevers,—a town belonging to the Ædui. These are seized by his allies, who destroy all that they cannot carry away, and Cæsar's army is in danger of being starved. Everything has been eaten up where he is, and the Loire, without bridges or fords, was between him and a country where food was to be found. He does cross the river, the Ædui having supposed that it would be impossible. He finds a spot in which his men can wade across with their shoulders just above the waters. Bad as the spot is for fording, in his great difficulty he makes the attempt and accomplishes it.

Then there is an account of a battle which Labienus is obliged to fight up near Paris. He has four legions away with him there, and having heard of Cæsar's misfortune at Gergovia, knows how imperative it is that he should join his chief. He fights his battle and wins it, and Cæsar tells the story quite as enthusiastically as though he himself had been the conqueror. When this difficulty is overcome, Labienus comes south and joins his Imperator.

The Gauls are still determined to drive Cæsar out of their country, and with this object call together a great council at Bibracte, which was the chief town of the Ædui. It was afterwards called Augustodunum, which has passed into the modern name Autun. At this meeting, the Ædui, who, having been for some years past bolstered up by Rome, think themselves the first of all the Gauls, demand that the chief authority in the revolt against Rome,—now that they have revolted, — shall be intrusted to them. An Æduan chief, they think, should be the commander-in-chief in this war against Rome. Who has done so much for the revolt as the Ædui, who have thrown over their friends the Romans,—now for about the tenth time? But Vercingetorix is unanimously elected, and the Æduan chiefs are disgusted. Then there is another battle. Vercingetorix thinks that he is strong enough to attack the enemy as Cæsar is going down south towards the Province. Cæsar, so says Vercingetorix, is in fact retreating. And, indeed, it seems that Cæsar was retreating. But the Gauls are beaten and fly, losing some three thousand of their men who are slaughtered in the fight. Vercingetorix shuts him-

self up in a town called Alesia, and Cæsar prepares for another siege.

The taking of Alesia is the last event told in Cæsar's Commentary on the Gallic War, and of all the stories told, it is perhaps the most heartrending. Civilisation was never forwarded in a fashion more terrible than that which prevailed at this siege. Vercingetorix with his whole army is forced into the town, and Cæsar surrounds it with ditches, works, lines, and ramparts, so that no one shall be able to escape from it. Before this is completed, and while there is yet a way open of leaving the town, the Gaulish chief sends out horsemen, who are to go to all the tribes of Gaul, and convene the fighting men to that place, so that by their numbers they may raise the siege and expel the Romans. We find that these horsemen do as they are bidden, and that a great Gaulish conference is held, at which it is decided how many men shall be sent by each tribe. Vercingetorix has been very touching in his demand that all this shall be done quickly. He has food for the town for thirty days. Probably it may be stretched to last a little longer. Then, if the tribes are not true to him, he and the eighty thousand souls he has with him must perish. The horsemen make good their escape from the town, and Vercingetorix, with his eighty thousand hungry souls around him, prepares to wait. It seems to us, when we think what must have been the Gallia of those days, and when we remember how far thirty days would now be for sufficing for such a purpose, that the difficulties to be overcome were insuperable. But Cæsar says that the tribes did send their men, each tribe sending the number demanded,

except the Bellovaci,—the men of Beauvais,—who declared that they chose to wage war on their own account; but even they, out of kindness, lent two thousand men. Cæsar explains that even his own best friends among the Gauls,—among whom was one Commius, who had been very useful to him in Britain, and whom he had made king over his own tribe, the Atrebates,—at this conjuncture of affairs felt themselves bound to join the national movement. This Commius had even begged for the two thousand men of Beauvais. So great, says Cæsar, was the united desire of Gaul to recover Gallic liberty, that they were deterred from coming by no memory of benefits or of friendship. Eight thousand horsemen and two hundred and forty thousand footmen assembled themselves in the territories of the Ædui. Alesia was north of the Ædui, amidst the Lingones. This enormous army chose its generals, and marched off to Alesia to relieve Vercingetorix.

But the thirty days were past, and more than past, and the men and women in Alesia were starving. No tidings ever had reached Alesia of the progress which was being made in the gathering of their friends. It had come to be very bad with them there. Some were talking of unconditional surrender. Others proposed to cut their way through the Roman lines. Then one Critognatus had a suggestion to make, and Cæsar gives us the words of his speech. It has been common with the Greek and Latin historians to put speeches into the mouths of certain orators, adding the words when the matter has come within either their knowledge or belief. Cæsar does not often

thus risk his credibility; but on this occasion he does so. We have the speech of Critognatus, word for word. Of those who speak of surrender he thinks so meanly that he will not notice them. As to that cutting a way through the Roman lines, which means death, he is of opinion that to endure misfortune is greater than to die. Many a man can die who cannot bravely live and suffer. Let them endure a little longer. Why doubt the truth and constancy of the tribes? Then he makes his suggestion. Let those who can fight, and are thus useful,—eat those who are useless and cannot fight; and thus live till the levies of all Gaul shall have come to their succour! Those who have authority in Alesia cannot quite bring themselves to this, but they do that which is horrible in the next degree. They will turn out of the town all the old, all the weak, and all the women. After that,—if that will not suffice,—then they will begin to eat each other. The town belongs, or did belong, to a people called the Mandubii,—not to Vercingetorix or his tribe; and the Mandubii, with their children and women, are compelled to go out.

But whither shall they go? Cæsar has told us that there was a margin of ground between his lines and the city wall,—an enclosed space from which there was no egress except into Cæsar's camp or into the besieged town. Here stand these weak ones,—aged men, women, and children,—and implore Cæsar to receive them into his camp, so that they may pass out into the open country. There they stood as supplicants, on that narrow margin of ground between two armies. Their own friends, having no food for them,

had expelled them from their own homes. Would Cæsar have mercy? Cæsar, with a wave of his hand, declines to have mercy. He tells us what he himself decides to do in eight words. "At Cæsar, depositis in vallo custodiis, recipi prohibebat." "But Cæsar, having placed guards along the rampart, forbade that they should be received." We hear no more of them, but we know that they perished!

The collected forces of Gaul do at last come up to attempt the rescue of Vercingetorix,—and indeed they come in time; were they able by coming to do anything? They attack Cæsar in his camp, and a great battle is fought beneath the eyes of the men in Alesia. But Cæsar is very careful that those who now are hemmed up in the town shall not join themselves to the Gauls who had spread over the country all around him. We hear how during the battle Cæsar comes up himself, and is known by the colour of his cloak. We again feel, as we read his account of the fighting, that the Gauls nearly win, and that they ought to win. But at last they are driven headlong in flight,—all the levies of all the tribes. The Romans kill very many: were not the labour of killing too much for them, they might kill all. A huge crowd, however, escapes, and the men scatter themselves back into their tribes.

On the next day Vercingetorix yields himself and the city to Cæsar. During the late battle he and his men shut up within the walls have been simply spectators of the fighting. Cæsar is sitting in his lines before his camp; and there the chieftains, with Vercingetorix at their head, are brought up to him. Plu-

tarch tells us a story of the chieftain riding up before Cæsar, to deliver himself, with gilt armour, on a grand horse, caracolling and prancing. We cannot fancy that any horse out of Alesia, could, after the siege, have been fit for such holiday occasion. The horses out of Vercingetorix's stables had probably been eaten many days since. Then Cæsar again forgives the Ædui; but Vercingetorix is taken as a prisoner to Rome, is kept a prisoner for six years, is then led in Cæsar's Triumph, and, after these six years, is destroyed, as a victim needed for Cæsar's glory, — that so honour may be done to Cæsar! Cæsar puts his army into winter quarters, and determines to remain himself in Gaul during the winter. When his account of these things reaches Rome, a "supplication" of twenty days is decreed in his honour.

This is the end of Cæsar's Commentary "De Bello Gallico." The war was carried on for two years more; and a memoir of Cæsar's doings during those two years, —B.C. 51 and 50,—was written, after Cæsar's manner, by one Aulus Hirtius. There is no pretence on the writer's part that this was the work of Cæsar's hands, as in a short preface he makes an author's apology for venturing to continue what Cæsar had begun. The most memorable circumstance of Cæsar's warfares told in this record of two campaigns is the taking of Uxellodunum, a town in the south-west of France, the site of which is not now known. Cæsar took the town by cutting off the water, and then horribly mutilated the inhabitants who had dared to defend their own hearths.

"Cæsar," says this historian, "knowing well that his clemency was acknowledged by all men, and that he need not fear that any punishment inflicted by him would be attributed to the cruelty of his nature, perceiving also that he could never know what might be the end of his policy if such rebellions should continue to break out, thought that other Gauls should be deterred by the fear of punishment." So he cut off the hands of all those who had borne arms at Uxellodunum, and turned the maimed wretches adrift upon the world! And his apologist adds, that he gave them life so that the punishment of these wicked ones,—who had fought for their liberty,—might be the more manifest to the world at large! This was perhaps the crowning act of Cæsar's cruelty,—defended, as we see, by the character he had achieved for clemency!

Soon after this Gaul was really subdued, and then we hear the first preparatory notes of the coming civil war. An attempt was made at Rome to ruin Cæsar in his absence. One of the consuls of the year,—B.C. 51,—endeavoured to deprive him of the remainder of the term of his proconsulship, and to debar him from seeking the suffrages of the people for the consulship in his absence. Two of his legions are also demanded from him, and are surrendered by him. The order, indeed, is for one legion from him and one from Pompeius; but he has had with him, as the reader will remember, a legion borrowed from Pompeius;—and thus in fact Cæsar is called upon to give up two legions. And he gives them up,—not being as yet quite ready to pass the Rubicon.

CHAPTER IX.

FIRST BOOK OF THE CIVIL WAR.—CÆSAR CROSSES THE RUBICON.—FOLLOWS POMPEY TO BRUNDUSIUM.—AND CONQUERS AFRANIUS IN SPAIN.—B.C. 49.

CÆSAR now gives us his history of that civil war in which he and Pompey contended for the mastery over Rome and the Republic. In his first Commentary he had recorded his campaigns in Gaul,—campaigns in which he reduced tribes which were, if not hostile, at any rate foreign, and by his success in which he carried on and maintained the potency, traditions, and purport of the Roman Republic. It was the ambition of the Roman to be master of the known world. In his ideas no more of the world was really known than had become Roman, and any extension to the limits of this world could only be made by the addition of so-called barbarous tribes to the number of Roman subjects. In reducing Gaul, therefore, and in fighting with the Germans, and in going over to Britain, Cæsar was doing that which all good Romans wished to see done, and was rivalling in the West the great deeds which Pompey had accomplished for the Republic in the East. In this second Commentary he is forced to deal with a subject which must have been less gratifying to Roman readers. He

relates to us the victories which he won with Roman legions over other legions equally Roman, and by which he succeeded in destroying the liberty of the Republic.

It must be acknowledged on Cæsar's behalf that in truth liberty had fallen in Rome before Cæsar's time. Power had produced wealth, and wealth had produced corruption. The tribes of Rome were bought and sold at the various elections, and a few great oligarchs, either of this faction or of that, divided among themselves the places of trust and honour and power, and did so with hands ever open for the grasping of public wealth. An honest man with clean hands and a conscience, with scruples and a love of country, became unfitted for public employment. Cato in these days was simply ridiculous; and even Cicero, though he was a trimmer, was too honest for the times. Laws were wrested from their purposes, and the very Tribunes* of the people had become the worst of tyrants. It was necessary, perhaps, that there should be a master;—so at least Cæsar thought. He had, no doubt, seen this necessity during all these years of fighting in Gaul, and had resolved that he would not be less than First in the new order of things. So he crossed the Rubicon.

The reader of this second Commentary will find it less alluring than the first. There is less in it of adventure, less of new strange life, and less of that sound,

* The Tribunes of the people were officers elected annually to act on behalf of the people as checks on the magistracy of the Republic, and were endowed with vast powers, which they were presumed to use for the protection of liberty. But the office of Tribune had become degraded to party purposes, as had every other office of the state.

healthy, joyous feeling which sprang from a thorough conviction on Cæsar's part that in crushing the Gauls he was doing a thoroughly good thing. To us, and our way of thinking, his doings in Gaul were stained with terrible cruelty. To him and to his Romans they were foul with no such stain. How other Roman conquerors acted to other conquered peoples we may learn from the fact, that Cæsar obtained a character for great mercy by his forbearance in Gaul. He always writes as though he were free from any sting of conscience, as he tells us of the punishments which policy called upon him to inflict. But as he writes of these civil wars, there is an absence of this feeling of perfect self-satisfaction, and at the same time he is much less cruel. Hecatombs of Gauls, whether men or women or children, he could see burned or drowned or starved, mutilated or tortured, without a shudder. He could give the command for such operations with less remorse than we feel when we order the destruction of a litter of undesirable puppies. But he could not bring himself to slay Roman legionaries, even in fair fighting, with anything like self-satisfaction. In this he was either soft-hearted or had a more thorough feeling of country than generals or soldiers who have fought in civil contests since his time have shown. In the Wars of the Roses and in those of Cromwell we recognise no such feeling. The American generals were not so restrained. But Cæsar seems to have valued a Roman legionary more than a tribe of Gauls.

Nevertheless he crossed the Rubicon. We have all heard of this crossing of the Rubicon, but Cæsar says nothing about it. The Rubicon was a little

river, now almost if not altogether unknown, running into the Adriatic between Ravenna and Ariminum,—Rimini,—and dividing the provinces of so-called Cisalpine Gaul from the territory under the immediate rule of the magistracy of Rome. Cæsar was, so to say, at home north of the Rubicon. He was in his own province, and had all things under his command. But he was forbidden by the laws even to enter the territory of Rome proper while in the command of a Roman province; and therefore, in crossing the Rubicon, he disobeyed the laws, and put himself in opposition to the constituted authorities of the city. It does not appear, however, that very much was thought of this, or that the passage of the river was in truth taken as the special sign of Cæsar's purpose, or as a deed that was irrevocable in its consequences. There are various pretty stories of Cæsar's hesitation as he stood on the brink of the river, doubting whether he would plunge the world into civil war. We are told how a spirit appeared to him and led him across the water with martial music, and how Cæsar, declaring that the die was cast, went on and crossed the fatal stream. But all this was fable, invented on Cæsar's behalf by Romans who came after Cæsar. Cæsar's purpose was, no doubt, well understood when he brought one of his legions down into that corner of his province, but offers to treat with him on friendly terms were made by Pompey and his party after he had established himself on the Roman side of the river.

When the civil war began, Cæsar had still, according to the assignment made to him, two years and a half left of his allotted period of government in the

three provinces; but his victories and his power had been watched with anxious eyes from Rome, and the Senate had attempted to decree that he should be recalled. Pompey was no longer Cæsar's friend, nor did Cæsar expect his friendship. Pompey, who had lately played his cards but badly, and must have felt that he had played them badly, had been freed from his bondage to Cæsar by the death of Crassus, the third triumvir, by the death of Julia, Cæsar's daughter, and by the course of things in Rome. It had been an unnatural alliance arranged by Cæsar with the view of clipping his rival's wings. The fortunes of Pompey had hitherto been so bright, that he also had seemed to be divine. While still a boy, he had commanded and conquered, women had adored him, the soldiers had worshipped him. Sulla had called him the Great; and, as we are told, had raised his hat to him in token of honour. He had been allowed the glory of a Triumph while yet a youth, and had triumphed a second time before he had reached middle life. He had triumphed again a third time, and the three Triumphs had been won in the three quarters of the globe. In all things he had been successful, and in all things happy. He had driven the swarming pirates from every harbour in the Mediterranean, and had filled Rome with corn. He had returned a conqueror with his legions from the East, and had dared to disband them, that he might live again as a private citizen. And after that, when it was thought necessary that the city should be saved, in her need, from the factions of her own citizens, he had been made sole consul. It is easier now to understand the character of Pom-

pey than the position which, by his unvaried successes, he had made for himself in the minds both of the nobles and of the people. Even up to this time, even after Cæsar's wars in Gaul, there was something of divinity hanging about Pompey, in which the Romans of the city trusted. He had been imperious, but calm in manner and self-possessed,—allowing no one to be his equal, but not impatient in making good his claims; grand, handsome, lavish when policy required it, rapacious when much was needed, never self-indulgent, heartless, false, cruel, politic, ambitious, very brave, and a Roman to the backbone. But he had this failing, this weakness;—when the time for the last struggle came, he did not quite know what it was that he desired to do; he did not clearly see his future. The things to be done were so great, that he had not ceased to doubt concerning them when the moment came in which doubt was fatal. Cæsar saw it all, and never doubted. That little tale of Cæsar standing on the bridge over the Rubicon pondering as to his future course,—divided between obedience and rebellion,—is very pretty. But there was no such pondering, and no such division. Cæsar knew very well what he meant and what he wanted.

Cæsar is full of his wrongs as he begins his second narrative. He tells us how his own friends are silenced in the Senate and in the city; how his enemies, Scipio, Cato, and Lentulus the consul, prevail; how no one is allowed to say a word for him. "Pompey himself," he says, "urged on by the enemies of Cæsar, and because he was unwilling that any one should equal himself in honour, had turned himself

altogether from Cæsar's friendship, and had gone back to the fellowship of their common enemies,—enemies whom he himself had created for Cæsar during the time of their alliance. At the same time, conscious of the scandal of those two legions which he had stopped on their destined road to Asia and Syria and taken into his own hand, he was anxious that the question should be referred to arms." Those two legions are very grievous to Cæsar. One was the legion which, as we remember, Pompey had given up to friendship,—and the Republic. When, in the beginning of these contests between the two rivals, the Senate had decided on weakening each by demanding from each a legion, Pompey had asked Cæsar for the restitution of that which he had so kindly lent. Cæsar, too proud to refuse payment of the debt, had sent that to his former friend, and had also sent another legion, as demanded, to the Senate. They were required nominally for service in the East, and now were in the hands of him who had been Cæsar's friend but had become his enemy. It is no wonder that Cæsar talks of the infamy or scandal of the two legions! He repeats his complaint as to the two legions again and again.

In the month of January Cæsar was at Ravenna, just north of the Rubicon, and in his own province. Messages pass between him and the Senate, and he proposes his terms. The Senate also proposes its terms. He must lay down his arms, or he will be esteemed an enemy by the Republic. All Rome is disturbed. The account is Cæsar's account, but we imagine that Rome was disturbed. "Soldiers are recruited over all Italy; arms are demanded, taxes are levied on the municipal-

ities, and money is taken from the sacred shrines; all laws divine and human are disregarded." Then Cæsar explains to his soldiers his wrongs, and the crimes of Pompey. He tells them how they, under his guidance, have been victorious, how under him they have "pacified" all Gaul and Germany, and he calls upon them to defend him who has enabled them to do such great things. He has but one legion with him, but that legion declares that it will obey him,—him and the tribunes of the people, some of whom, acting on Cæsar's side, have come over from Rome to Ravenna. We can appreciate the spirit of this allusion to the tribunes, so that there may seem to be still some link between Cæsar and the civic authorities. When the soldiers have expressed their goodwill, he goes to Ariminum, and so the Rubicon is passed.

There are still more messages. Cæsar expresses himself as greatly grieved that he should be subjected to so much suspense, nevertheless he is willing to suffer anything for the Republic;—"omnia pati reipublicæ causâ." Only let Pompey go to his province, let the legions in and about Rome be disbanded, let all the old forms of free government be restored, and panic be abolished, and then,—when that is done,—all difficulties may be settled in a few minutes' talking. The consuls and Pompey send back word that if Cæsar will go back into Gaul and dismiss his army, Pompey shall go at once to Spain. But Pompey and the consuls with their troops will not stir till Cæsar shall have given security for his departure. Each demands that the other shall first abandon his position. Of course all these messages mean nothing.

Cæsar, complaining bitterly of injustice, sends a portion of his small army still farther into the Roman territory. Marc Antony goes to Arezzo with five cohorts, and Cæsar occupies three other cities with a cohort each. The marvel is that he was not attacked and driven back by Pompey. We may probably conclude that the soldiers, though under the command of Pompey, were not trustworthy as against Cæsar. As Cæsar regrets his two legions, so no doubt do the two legions regret their commander. At any rate, the consular forces with Pompey and the consuls and a host of senators retreat southwards to Brundusium,—Brindisi,—intending to leave Italy by the port which we shall all use before long when we go eastwards. During this retreat, the first blood in the civil war is spilt at Corfinium, a town which, if it now stood at all, would stand in the Abruzzi. Cæsar there is victor in a small engagement, and obtains possession of the town. The Pompeian officers whom he finds there he sends away, and allows them even to carry with them money which he believes to have been taken from the public treasury. Throughout his route southward the soldiers of Pompey,—who had heretofore been his soldiers,—return to him. Pompey and the consuls still retreat, and still Cæsar follows them, though Pompey had boasted, when first warned to beware of Cæsar, that he had only to stamp upon Italian soil and legions would arise from the earth ready to obey him. He knows, however, that away from Rome, in her provinces, in Macedonia and Achaia, in Asia and Cilicia, in Sicily, Sardinia, and Africa, in Mauritania and the two Spains, there are Roman legions which as yet

know no Cæsar. It may be better for Pompey that he should stamp his foot somewhere out of Italy. At any rate he sends the obedient consuls and his attendant senators over to Dyrrachium in Illyria with a part of his army, and follows with the remainder as soon as Cæsar is at his heels. Cæsar makes an effort to intercept him and his fleet, but in that he fails. Thus Pompey deserts Rome and Italy,—and never again sees the imperial city or the fair land.

Cæsar explains to us why he does not follow his enemy and endeavour at once to put an end to the struggle. Pompey is provided with shipping and he is not; and he is aware that the force of Rome lies in her provinces. Moreover, Rome may be starved by Pompey, unless he, Cæsar, can take care that the corn-growing countries, which are the granaries of Rome, are left free for the use of the city. He must make sure of the two Gauls, and of Sardinia, and of Sicily, of Africa too, if it may be possible. He must win to his cause the two Spains, of which at least the northern province was at present devoted to Pompey. He sends one lieutenant to Sardinia with a legion, another to Sicily with three legions,—and from Sicily over into Africa. These provinces had been allotted to partisans of Pompey; but Cæsar is successful with them all. To Cato, the virtuous man, had been assigned the government of Sicily; but Cato finds no Pompeian army ready for his use, and, complaining bitterly that he has been deceived and betrayed by the head of his faction, runs away, and leaves his province to Cæsar's officers. Cæsar determines that he himself will carry the war into Spain.

But he found it necessary first to go to Rome, and Cæsar, in his account of what he did there, hardly tells us the whole truth. We quite go along with him when he explains to us that, having collected what sort of a Senate he could,—for Pompey had taken away with him such senators as he could induce to follow him,—and having proposed to this meagre Senate that ambassadors should be sent to Pompey, the Senate accepted his suggestion; but that nobody could be induced to go on such an errand. Pompey had already declared that all who remained at Rome were his enemies. And it may probably be true that Cæsar, as he says, found a certain tribune of the people at Rome who opposed him in all that he was doing, though we should imagine that the opposition was not violent. But his real object in going to Rome was to lay hand on the treasure of the Republic,—the sanctius ærarium,—which was kept in the temple of Saturn for special emergencies of State. That he should have taken this we do not wonder;—but we do wonder that he should have taken the trouble to say that he did not do so. He professes that he was so hindered by that vexatious tribune, that he could not accomplish the purposes for which he had come. But he certainly did take the money, and we cannot doubt but that he went to Rome especially to get it.

Cæsar, on his way to Spain, goes to Marseilles, which, under the name of Massilia, was at this time, as it is now, the most thriving mercantile port on the Mediterranean. It belonged to the province of Further Gaul, but it was in fact a colony of Greek traders. Its possession was now necessary to Cæsar. The magis-

trates of the town, when called upon for their adhesion, gave a most sensible answer. They protest that they are very fond of Cæsar, and very fond of Pompey. They don't understand all these affairs of Rome, and regret that two such excellent men should quarrel. In the mean time they prefer to hold their own town. Cæsar speaks of this decision as an injury to himself, and is instigated by such wrongs against him to besiege the city, which he does both by land and sea, leaving officers there for the purpose, and going on himself to Spain.

At this time all Spain was held by three officers, devoted to the cause of Pompey, though, from what has gone before, it is clear that Cæsar fears nothing from the south. Afranius commanded in the north and east, holding the southern spurs of the Pyrenees. Petreius, who was stationed in Lusitania, in the south-west, according to agreement, hurries up to the assistance of Afranius as soon as Cæsar approaches. The Pompeian and Cæsarian armies are brought into close quarters in the neighbourhood of Ilerda (Lerida), on the little river Sicoris, or Segre, which runs into the Ebro. They are near the mountains here, and the nature of the fighting is controlled by the rapidity and size of the rivers, and the inequality of the ground. Cæsar describes the campaign with great minuteness, imparting to it a wonderful interest by the clearness of his narrative. Afranius and Petreius hold the town of Ilerda, which is full of provisions. Cæsar is very much pressed by want, as the corn and grass have not yet grown, and the country supplies of the former year are almost exhausted. So great are his difficulties, that tidings reach Rome that Afranius has conquered him. Hearing

this, many who were still clinging to the city, doubtful as to the side they would take, go away to Pompey. But Cæsar at last manages to make Ilerda too hot for the Pompeian generals. He takes his army over one river in coracles, such as he had seen in Britain; he turns the course of another; fords a third, breaking the course of the stream by the bulk of his horses; and bridges a fourth. Afranius and Petreius find that they must leave Ilerda, and escape over the Ebro among the half-barbarous tribe further south, and make their way, if possible, among the Celtibri,—getting out of Aragon into Castile, as the division was made in after-ages. Cæsar gives us as one reason for this intended march on the part of his enemies, that Pompey was well known by those tribes, but that the name of Cæsar was a name as yet obscure to the barbarians. It was not, however, easy for Afranius to pass over the Ebro without Cæsar's leave, and Cæsar will by no means give him leave. He intercepts the Pompeians, and now turns upon them that terrible engine of want from which he had suffered so much. He continues so to drive them about, still north of the Ebro, that they can get at no water; and at last they are compelled to surrender.

During the latter days of this contest the Afranians, as they are called—Roman legionaries, as are the soldiers of Cæsar—fraternise with their brethren in Cæsar's camp, and there is something of free intercourse between the two Roman armies. The upshot is that the soldiers of Afranius resolve to give themselves up to Cæsar, bargaining, however, that their own generals shall be secure. Afranius is willing enough; but his

brother-general, Petreius, with more of the Roman at heart, will not hear of it. We shall hear hereafter the strange fate of this Petreius. He stops the conspiracy with energy, and forces from his own men, and even from Afranius, an oath against surrender. He orders that all Cæsar's soldiers found in their camp shall be killed, and, as Cæsar tells us, brings back the affair to the old form of war. But it is all of no avail. The Afranians are so driven by the want of water, that the two generals are at last compelled to capitulate and lay down their arms.

Five words which are used by Cæsar in the description of this affair give us a strong instance of his conciseness in the use of words, and of the capability for conciseness which the Latin language affords. "Premebantur Afraniani pabulatione, aquabantur ægre." "The soldiers of Afranius were much distressed in the matter of forage, and could obtain water only with great difficulty." These twenty words translate those five which Cæsar uses, perhaps with fair accuracy; but many more than twenty would probably have been used by any English historian in dealing with the same facts.

Cæsar treats his compatriots with the utmost generosity. So many conquered Gauls he would have sold as slaves, slaughtering their leaders, or he would have cut off their hands, or have driven them down upon the river and have allowed them to perish in the waters. But his conquered foes are Roman soldiers, and he simply demands that the army of Afranius shall be disbanded, and that the leaders of it shall go, —whither they please. He makes them a speech in which he explains how badly they have treated him.

Nevertheless he will hurt no one. He has borne it all, and will bear it, patiently. Let the generals only leave the Province, and let the army which they have led be disbanded. He will not keep a soldier who does not wish to stay with him, and will even pay those whom Afranius has been unable to pay out of his own funds. Those who have houses and land in Spain may remain there. Those who have none he will first feed and afterwards take back, if not to Italy, at any rate to the borders of Italy. The property which his own soldiers have taken from them in the chances of war shall be restored, and he out of his own pocket will compensate his own men. He performs his promise, and takes all those who do not choose to remain, to the banks of the Var, which divides the Province from Italy, and there sets them down, full, no doubt, of gratitude to their conqueror. Never was there such clemency,—or, we may say, better policy! Cæsar's whole campaign in Spain had occupied him only forty days.

In the mean time Decimus Brutus, to whom we remember that Cæsar had given the command of the ships which he prepared against the Veneti in the west of Gaul, and who was hereafter to be one of those who slew him in the Capitol, obtains a naval victory over the much more numerous fleet of the Massilians. They had prepared seventeen big ships,—"naves longæ" they are called by Cæsar,—and of these Brutus either destroys or takes nine. In his next book Cæsar proceeds to tell us how things went on at Marseilles both by sea and land after this affair.

CHAPTER X.

SECOND BOOK OF THE CIVIL WAR.—THE TAKING OF MARSEILLES.—VARRO IN THE SOUTH OF SPAIN.—THE FATE OF CURIO BEFORE UTICA.—B.C. 49.

In his chronicle of the Gallic war, Cæsar in each book completed the narrative of a year's campaign. In treating of the civil war he devotes the first and second books to the doings of one year. There are three distinct episodes of the year's campaign narrated in the second;—the taking of Marseilles, the subjugation of the southern province of Spain,—if that can be said to be subjugated which gave itself up very readily,—and the destruction of a Roman army in Africa under the hands of a barbarian king. But of all Cæsar's writings it is perhaps the least interesting, as it tells us but little of what Cæsar did himself,—and in fact contains chiefly Cæsar's records of the doings of his lieutenants by sea and land.

He begins by telling us of the enormous exertions made both by the besiegers and by the besieged at Massilia, which town was now held by Domitius on the part of Pompey,—to supplement whom at sea a certain Nasidius was sent with a large fleet. Young

Brutus, as will be remembered, was attacking the harbour on behalf of Cæsar, and had already obtained a victory over the Massilians before Nasidius came up; and Trebonius, also on the part of Cæsar, was besieging the town from the land. This Decimus Brutus was one of those conspirators who afterwards conspired against Cæsar and slew him, — and Trebonius was another of the number. The wise Greeks of the city,—more wise than fortunate, however,—had explained to Cæsar when he first expressed his wish to have the town on his side, that really to them there was no difference between Pompey and Cæsar, both of whom they loved with all their hearts,—but they had been compelled to become partisans of Pompey, the Pompeian general Domitius being the first to enter their town; and now they find themselves obliged to fight as Pompeians in defence of their wealth and their homes. Thus driven by necessity, they fight well and do their very best to favour the side which we must henceforward call that of the Republic as against an autocrat; —for, during this siege of Marseilles, Cæsar had been appointed Dictator, and a law to that effect had been passed at Rome, where the passing of such a law was no doubt easy enough in the absence of Pompey, of the consuls, and of all the senators who were Pompey's friends.

The Massilians had now chosen their side, and they do their very best. We are told that the Cæsarean troops, from the high ground on which Trebonius had placed his camp, could look down into the town, and could see "how all the youth who had been left in the city, and all the elders with their children and wives,

and the sentinels of the city, either stretched their hands to heaven from the walls, or, entering the temples of the immortal gods, and throwing themselves before their sacred images, prayed that the heavenly powers would give them victory. Nor was there one among them who did not believe that on the result of that day depended all that they had,"—namely, liberty, property, and life: for the Massilians, doubtless, had heard of Avaricum, of Alesia, and of Uxellodunum. "When the battle was begun," says Cæsar, "the Massilians failed not at all in valour; but, mindful of the lessons they had just received from their townsmen, fought with the belief that the present was their only opportunity of doing aught for their own preservation; and that to those who should fall in battle, loss of life would only come a little sooner than to the others, who would have to undergo the same fate, should the city be taken." Cæsar, as he wrote this, doubtless thought of what he had done in Gaul when policy demanded from him an extremity of cruelty; and, so writing, he enhanced the clemency with which, as he is about to tell us, he afterwards treated the Massilians. When the time came it did not suit him to depopulate a rich town, the trade of whose merchants was beneficial both to Rome and to the Province. He is about to tell us of his mercy, and therefore explains to us beforehand how little was mercy expected from him. We feel that every line he writes is weighed, though the time for such weighing must have been very short with one whose hands were so full as were always the hands of Cæsar.

Nasidius, whom we may call Pompey's admiral, was of no use at all. The Massilians, tempted by his coming, attack bravely the ship which bears the flag of young Brutus; but young Brutus is too quick for them, and the unhappy Massilians run two of their biggest vessels against each other in their endeavour to pin that of the Cæsarean admiral between them. The Massilian fleet is utterly dispersed. Five are sunk, four are taken: one gets off with Nasidius, who runs away, making no effort to fight; who has been sent there,—so Cæsar hints,—by Pompey, not to give assistance, but only to pretend to give assistance. One ship gets back into the harbour with the sad tidings; and the Massilians—despairing only for a moment at the first blush of the bad news—determine that their walls may still be defended.

The town was very well supplied with such things as were needed for defence, the people being a provident people, well instructed and civilised, with means at their command. We are told of great poles twelve feet long, with sharp iron heads to them, which the besiegers could throw with such force from the engines on their walls as to drive them through four tiers of the wicker crates or stationary shields which the Cæsareans built up for their protection,—believing that no force could drive a weapon through them. As we read of this we cannot but think of Armstrong and Whitfield guns, and iron plates, and granite batteries, and earthworks. These terrible darts, thrown from "balistæ," are very sore upon the Cæsareans; they therefore contrive an immense tower, so high that it

cannot be reached by any weapon, so built that no wood or material subject to fire shall be on the outside,—which they erect story by story, of very great strength. And as they raise this step by step, each story is secured against fire and against the enemy. The reader,—probably not an engineer himself,—is disposed to think as he struggles through this minute description of the erection which Cæsar gives, and endeavours to realise the way in which it is done, that Cæsar must himself have served specially as an engineer. But in truth he was not at this siege himself, and had nothing to do with the planning of the tower, and must in this instance at least have got a written description from his officer,—as he probably did before when he built the memorable bridge over the Rhine. And when the tower is finished, they make a long covered way or shed,—musculum or muscle Cæsar calls it; and with this they form for themselves a passage from the big tower to a special point in the walls of the town. This muscle is so strong with its sloping roof that nothing thrown upon it will break or burn it. The Massilians try tubs of flaming pitch, and great fragments of rock; but these simply slip to the ground, and are pulled away with long poles and forks. And the Cæsareans, from the height of their great tower, have so terrible an advantage! The Massilians cannot defend their wall, and a breach is made, or almost made.

The Massilians can do no more. The very gods are against them. So they put on the habit of supplicants, and go forth to the conquerors. They will give their city to Cæsar. Cæsar is expected. Will Trebonius

be so good as to wait till Cæsar comes? If Trebonius should proceed with his work so that the soldiers should absolutely get into the town, then;—Trebonius knows very well what would happen then. A little delay cannot hurt. Nothing shall be done till Cæsar comes. As it happens, Cæsar has already especially ordered that the city shall be spared; and a kind of truce is made, to endure till Cæsar shall come and take possession. Trebonius has a difficulty in keeping his soldiers from the plunder; but he does restrain them, and besiegers and besieged are at rest, and wait for Cæsar.

But these Massilians are a crafty people. The Cæsarean soldiers, having agreed to wait, take it easily, and simply amuse themselves in these days of waiting. When they are quite off their guard, and a high wind favours the scheme, the Massilians rush out and succeed in burning the tower, and the muscle, and the rampart, and the sheds, and all the implements. Even though the tower was built with brick, it burns freely,—so great is the wind. Then Trebonius goes to work, and does it all again. Because there is no more wood left round about the camp, he makes a rampart of a new kind,—hitherto unheard of,—with bricks. Doubtless the Cæsarean soldiers had first to make the bricks, and we can imagine what were their feelings in reference to the Massilians. But however that may be, they work so well and so hard that the Massilians soon see that their late success is of no avail. Nothing is left to them. Neither perfidy nor valour can avail them, and now again they give themselves up. They

are starved and suffering from pestilence, their fortifications are destroyed, they have no hope of aid from without,—and now they give themselves up,—intending no fraud. "Sese dedere sine fraude constituunt." Domitius, the Pompeian general, manages to escape in a ship. He starts with three ships, but the one in which he himself sails alone escapes the hands of "young" Brutus. Surely now will Marseilles be treated with worse treatment than that which fell on the Gaulish cities. But such is by no means Cæsar's will. Cæsar takes their public treasure and their ships, and reminding them that he spares them rather for their name and old character than for any merits of theirs shown towards him, leaves two legions among them, and goes to Rome. At Avaricum, when the Gauls had fought to defend their own liberties, he had destroyed everybody;—at Alesia he had decreed the death of every inhabitant when they had simply asked him leave to pass through his camp;—at Uxellodunum he had cut off the hands and poked out the eyes of Gauls who had dared to fight for their country. But the Gauls were barbarians whom it was necessary that Cæsar should pacify. The Massilians were Greeks, and a civilised people,—and might be useful.

Before coming on to Marseilles there had been a little more for Cæsar to do in Spain, where, as was told in the last chapter, he had just compelled Afranius and Petreius to lay down their arms and disband their legions. Joined with them had been a third Pompeian general, one Varro,—a distinguished man, though not, perhaps, a great general,—of whom Cæsar tells us that

with his Roman policy he veered between Pompeian and Cæsarean tactics till, unfortunately for himself, he declared for Pompey and the wrong side, when he heard that Afranius was having his own way in the neighbourhood of Lerida. But Varro is in the south of Spain, in Andalusia,—or Bætica, as it was then called,—and in this southern province of Spain it seems that Cæsar's cause was more popular than that of Pompey. Cæsar, at any rate, has but little difficulty with Varro. The Pompeian officer is deserted by his legions, and gives himself up very quickly. Cæsar does not care to tell us what he did with Varro, but we know that he treated his brother Roman with the utmost courtesy. Varro was a very learned man, and a friend of Cicero's, and one who wrote books, and was a credit to Rome as a man of letters if not as a general. We are told that he wrote 490 volumes, and that he lived to be eighty-eight,—a fate very uncommon with Romans who meddled with public affairs in these days. Cæsar made everything smooth in the south of Spain, restoring the money and treasures which Varro had taken from the towns, and giving thanks to everybody. Then he went on over the Pyrenees to Marseilles, and made things smooth there.

But in the mean time things were not at all smooth in Africa. The name of Africa was at this time given to a small province belonging to the Republic, lying to the east of Numidia, in which Carthage had stood when Carthage was a city, containing that promontory which juts out towards Sicily, and having Utica as its Roman capital. It has been already said that

when Cæsar determined to gain possession of certain provinces of the Republic before he followed Pompey across the Adriatic, he sent a lieutenant with three legions into Sicily, desiring him to go on to Africa as soon as things should have been arranged in the island after the Cæsarean fashion. The Sicilian matter is not very troublesome, as Cato, the virtuous man, in whose hands the government of the island had been intrusted on behalf of the Republic, leaves it on the arrival of the Cæsarean legions, complaining bitterly of Pompey's conduct. Then Cæsar's lieutenant goes over to Africa with two legions, as commanded, proposing to his army the expulsion of one Attius Varus, who had, according to Cæsar's story, taken irregular possession of the province, keeping it on behalf of Pompey, but not allowing the governor appointed by the Republic so much as to put his foot on the shore. This lieutenant was a great favourite of Cæsar, by name Curio, who had been elected tribune of the people just when the Senate was making its attempt to recall Cæsar from his command in Gaul. In that emergency, Curio as tribune had been of service to Cæsar, and Cæsar loved the young man. He was one of those who, though noble by birth, had flung themselves among the people, as Catiline had done and Clodius,—unsteady, turbulent, unscrupulous, vicious, needy, fond of pleasure, rapacious, but well educated, brave, and clever. Cæsar himself had been such a man in his youth, and could easily forgive such faults in the character of one who, in addition to such virtues as have been named, possessed that farther and greater

virtue of loving Cæsar. Cæsar expected great things from Curio, and trusted him thoroughly. Curio, with many ships and his two legions, lands in Africa, and prepares to win the province for his great friend. He does obtain some little advantage, so that he is called "Imperator" by his soldiers,—a name not given to a general till he has been victorious in the field; but it seems clear, from Cæsar's telling of the story, that Curio's own officers and own soldiers distrusted him, and were doubtful whether they would follow him, or would take possession of the ships and return to Sicily; —or would go over to Attius Varus, who had been their commander in Italy before they had deserted from Pompey to Cæsar. A council of war is held, and there is much doubt. It is not only or chiefly of Attius Varus, their Roman enemy, that they are afraid; but there is Juba in their neighbourhood, the king of Numidia, who will certainly fight for Varus and against Curio. He is Pompey's declared friend, and equally declared as Cæsar's foe. He has, too, special grounds of quarrel against Curio himself; and if he comes in person with his army,—bringing such an army as he can bring if he pleases,—it will certainly go badly with Curio, should Curio be distant from his camp. Then Curio, not content with his council of war, and anxious that his soldiers should support him in his desire to fight, makes a speech to the legionaries. We must remember, of course, that Cæsar gives us the words of this speech, and that Cæsar must himself have put the words together.

It is begun in the third person. He,—that is Curio,

—tells the men how useful they were to Cæsar at Corfinium, the town at which they went over from Pompey to Cæsar. But in the second sentence he breaks into the first person and puts the very words into Curio's mouth. "For you and your services," he says, "were copied by all the towns; nor is it without cause that Cæsar thinks kindly of you, and the Pompeians unkindly. For Pompey, having lost no battle, but driven by the result of your deed, fled from Italy. Me, whom Cæsar holds most dear, and Sicily and Africa without which he cannot hold Rome and Italy, Cæsar has intrusted to your honour. There are some who advise you to desert me,—for what can be more desirable to such men than that they at the same time should circumvent me, and fasten upon you a foul crime? . . . . But you,—have you not heard of the things done by Cæsar in Spain,—two armies beaten, two generals conquered, two provinces gained, and all this done in forty days from that on which Cæsar first saw his enemy? Can those who, uninjured, were unable to stand against him, resist him now that they are conquered? And you, who followed Cæsar when victory on his side was uncertain, now that fortune has declared herself, will you go over to the conquered side when you are about to realise the reward of your zeal? . . . . But perhaps, though you love Cæsar, you distrust me. I will not say much of my own deserts towards you,—which are indeed less as yet than I had wished or you had expected." Then, having thus declared that he will not speak of himself, he does venture to say a few words on the sub-

ject. "But why should I pass over my own work, and the result that has been as yet achieved, and my own fortune in war? Is it displeasing to you that I brought over the whole army, safe, without losing a ship? That, as I came, at my first onslaught, I should have dispersed the fleet of the enemy? That, in two days, I should have been twice victorious with my cavalry; that I should have cut out two hundred transports from the enemy's harbour; that I should have so harassed the enemy that neither by land nor sea could they get food to supply their wants? Will it please you to repudiate such fortune and such guidance, and to connect yourself with the disgrace at Corfinium, the flight from Italy,"—namely, Pompey's flight to Dyrrachium,—"the surrender of Spain, and the evils of this African war? I indeed have wished to be called Cæsar's soldier, and you have called me your Imperator. If it repents you of having done so, I give you back the compliment. Give me back my own name, lest it seem that in scorn you have called me by that title of honour."

This is very spirited; and the merely rhetorical assertion by Cæsar that Curio thus spoke to his soldiers is in itself interesting, as showing us the way in which the legionaries were treated by their commanders, and in which the greatest general, of that or of any age, thought it natural that a leader should address his troops. It is of value, also, as showing the difficulty of keeping any legion true to either side in a civil war, in which, on either side, the men must fight for a commander they had learned to respect,

and against a commander they respected,—the commander in each case being a Roman Imperator. Curio, too, as we know, was a man who on such an occasion could use words. But that he used the words here put into his mouth, or any words like them, is very improbable. Cæsar was anxious to make the best apology he could for the gallant young friend who had perished in his cause, and has shown his love by making the man he loved memorable to all posterity.

But before the dark hour comes upon him the young man has a gleam of success, which, had he really spoken the words put into his mouth by Cæsar, would have seemed to justify them. He attacks the army of his fellow-Roman, Varus, and beats it, driving it back into Utica. He then resolves to besiege the town, and Cæsar implies that he would have been successful through the Cæsarean sympathies of the townsmen,—had it not been for the approach of the terrible Juba. Then comes a rumour which reaches Curio,—and which reaches Varus too inside the town,—that the Numidian king is hurrying to the scene with all his forces. He has finished another affair that he had on hand, and can now look to his Roman friends,—and to his Roman enemies. Juba craftily sends forward his præfect, or lieutenant, Sabura, with a small force of cavalry, and Curio is led to imagine that Juba has not come, and that Sabura has been sent with scanty aid to the relief of Varus. Surely he can give a good account of Sabura and that small body of Numidian horsemen. We see from the very first that Curio is

doomed. Cæsar, in a few touching words, makes his apology. "The young man's youth had much to do with it, and his high spirit; his former success, too, and his own faith in his own good fortune." There is no word of reproach. Curio makes another speech to his soldiers. "Hasten to your prey," he says, "hasten to your glory!" They do hasten,—after such a fashion that when the foremost of them reach Sabura's troops, the hindermost of them are scattered far back on the road. They are cut to pieces by Juba. Curio is invited by one of his officers to escape back to his tent. But Cæsar tells us that Curio in that last moment replied that having lost the army with which Cæsar had trusted him, he would never again look Cæsar in the face. That he did say some such words as these, and that they were repeated by that officer to Cæsar, is probable enough. "So, fighting, he is slain;"—and there is an end of the man whom Cæsar loved.

What then happened was very sad for a Roman army. Many hurry down to the ships at the sea; but there is so much terror, so much confusion, and things are so badly done, that but very few get over to Sicily. The remainder endeavour to give themselves up to Varus; after doing which, could they have done it, their position would not have been very bad. A Roman surrendering to a Roman would, at the worst, but find that he was compelled to change his party. But Juba comes up and claims them as his prey, and Varus does not dare to oppose the barbarian king. Juba kills the most of them, but sends a few, whom he thinks may serve his purpose and add to his glory, back to his own king-

dom. In doing which Juba behaved no worse than Cæsar habitually behaved in Gaul; but Cæsar always writes as though not only a Roman must regard a Roman as more than a man, but as though also all others must so regard Romans. And by making such assertions in their own behalf, Romans were so regarded. We are then told that the barbarian king of Numidia rode into Utica triumphant, with Roman senators in his train; and the names of two special Roman senators Cæsar sends down to posterity as having been among that base number. As far as we can spare them, they shall be spared.

Of Juba the king, and of his fate, we shall hear again.

CHAPTER XI.

THIRD BOOK OF THE CIVIL WAR.—CÆSAR FOLLOWS POMPEY INTO ILLYRIA.—THE LINES OF PETRA AND THE BATTLE OF PHARSALIA.—B.C. 48.

CÆSAR begins the last book of his last Commentary by telling us that this was the year in which he, Cæsar, was by the law permitted to name a consul. He names Publius Servilius to act in conjunction with himself. The meaning of this is, that, as Cæsar had been created Dictator, Pompey having taken with him into Illyria the consuls of the previous year, Cæsar was now the only magistrate under whose authority a consul could be elected. No doubt he did choose the man, but the election was supposed to have been made in accordance with the forms of the Republic. He remained at Rome as Dictator for eleven days, during which he made various laws, of which the chief object was to lessen the insecurity caused by the disruption of the ordinary course of things; and then he went down to Brindisi on the track of Pompey. He had twelve legions with him, but he was badly off for ships in which to transport them; and he owns that the health of the men is bad, an autumn in the south of Italy having been very severe

on men accustomed to the healthy climate of Gaul and the north of Spain. Pompey, he tells us, had had a whole year to prepare his army,—a whole year, without warfare, and had collected men and ships and money, and all that support which assent gives, from Asia and the Cyclades, from Corcyra, Athens, Bithynia, Cilicia, Phœnicia, Egypt, and the free states of Achaia. He had with him nine Roman legions, and is expecting two more with his father-in-law Scipio out of Syria. He has three thousand archers from Crete, from Sparta, and from Pontus; he has twelve hundred slingers, and he has seven thousand cavalry from Galatia, Cappadocia, and Thrace. A valorous prince from Macedonia had brought him two hundred men, all mounted. Five hundred of Galatian and German cavalry, who had been left to overawe Ptolemy in Egypt, are brought to Pompey by the filial care of young Cnæus. He too had armed eight hundred of their own family retainers, and had brought them armed. Antiochus of Commagena sends him two hundred mounted archers,—mercenaries, however, not sent without promise of high payment. Dardani,—men from the land of old Troy, Bessi, from the banks of the Hebrus, Thessalians and Macedonians, have all been crowded together under Pompey's standard. We feel that Cæsar's mouth waters as he recounts them. But we feel also that he is preparing for the triumphant record in which he is about to tell us that all these swarms did he scatter to the winds of heaven with the handful of Roman legionaries which he at last succeeded in landing on the shores of Illyria.

Pompey has also collected from all parts "frumenti vim maximam"—"a great power of corn indeed," as an Irishman would say, translating the words literally. And he has covered the seas with his ships, so as to hinder Cæsar from coming out of Italy. He has eight vice-admirals to command his various fleets,—all of whom Cæsar names; and over them all, as admiral-in-chief, is Bibulus, who was joint-consul with Cæsar before Cæsar went to Gaul, and who was so harassed during his consulship by the Cæsareans that he shut himself up in his house, and allowed Cæsar to rule as sole consul. Now he is about to take his revenge; but the vengeance of such a one as Bibulus cannot reach Cæsar.

Cæsar having led his legions to Brindisi, makes them a speech which almost beats in impudence anything that he ever said or did. He tells them that as they have now nearly finished all his work for him;—they have only got to lay low the Republic with Pompey the Great, and all the forces of the Republic—to which, however, have to be added King Ptolemy in Egypt, King Pharnaces in Asia, and King Juba in Numidia;—they had better leave behind them at Brindisi all their little property, the spoils of former wars, so that they may pack the tighter in the boats in which he means to send them across to Illyria,—if only they can escape the mercies of ex-Consul Admiral Bibulus. There is no suggestion that at any future time they will recover their property. For their future hopes they are to trust entirely to Cæsar's generosity. With one shout they declare their readiness to obey him. He takes over

seven legions, escaping the dangers of those "rocks of evil fame," the Acroceraunia of which Horace tells us, —and escaping Bibulus also, who seems to have shut himself up in his ship as he did before in his house during the consulship. Cæsar seems to have made the passage with the conviction that had he fallen into the hands of Bibulus everything would have been lost. And with ordinary precaution and diligence on the part of Bibulus such would have been the result. Yet he makes the attempt,—trusting to the Fortune of Cæsar,—and he succeeds. He lands at a place which he calls Palæste on the coast of Epirus, considerably to the south of Dyrrachium, in Illyria. At Dyrrachium Pompey had landed the year before, and there is now stored that wealth of provision of which Cæsar has spoken. But Bibulus at last determines to be active, and he does manage to fall upon the empty vessels which Cæsar sends back to fetch the remainder of his army. "Having come upon thirty of them, he falls upon them with all the wrath occasioned by his own want of circumspection and grief, and burns them. And in the same fire he kills the sailors and the masters of the vessels, —hoping to deter others," Cæsar tells us, "by the severity of the punishment." After that we are not sorry to hear that he potters about on the seas very busy, but still incapable, and that he dies, as it seems, of a broken heart. He does indeed catch one ship afterwards,—not laden with soldiers, but coming on a private venture, with children, servants, and suchlike, dependants and followers of Cæsar's camp. All these, including the children, Bibulus slaughters, down to

the smallest child. We have, however, to remember that the story is told by Cæsar, and that Cæsar did not love Bibulus.

Marc Antony has been left at Brindisi in command of the legions which Cæsar could not bring across at his first trip for want of sufficient ship-room, and is pressed very much by Cæsar to make the passage. There are attempts at treaties made, but as we read the account we feel that Cæsar is only obtaining the delay which is necessary to him till he shall have been joined by Antony. We are told how by this time the camps of Cæsar and Pompey have been brought so near together that they are separated only by the river Apsus,—for Cæsar had moved northwards towards Pompey's stronghold. And the soldiers talked together across the stream; "nor, the while, was any weapon thrown,—by compact between those who talked." Then Cæsar sends Vatinius, as his ambassador, down to the river to talk of peace; and Vatinius demands with a loud voice "whether it should not be allowed to citizens to send legates to citizens, to treat of peace;—a thing that has been allowed even to deserters from the wilds of the Pyrenees and to robbers,—especially with so excellent an object as that of hindering citizens from fighting with citizens." This seems so reasonable, that a day is named, and Labienus,—who has deserted from Cæsar and become Pompeian,—comes to treat on one side of the river, and Vatinius on the other. But,—so Cæsar tells the story himself,—the Cæsarean soldiers throw their weapons at their old general. They probably cannot endure the voice or sight of one whom they re-

gard as a renegade. Labienus escapes under the protection of those who are with him,—but he is full of wrath against Cæsar. "After this," says he, "let us cease to speak of treaties, for there can be no peace for us till Cæsar's head has been brought to us." But the colloquies over the little stream no doubt answered Cæsar's purpose.

Cæsar is very anxious to get his legions over from Italy, and even scolds Antony for not bringing them. There is a story,—which he does not tell himself,—that he put himself into a small boat, intending to cross over to Brindisi in a storm, to hurry matters, and that he encouraged the awe-struck master of the boat by reminding him that he would carry "Cæsar and his fortunes." The story goes on to say that the sailors attempted the trip, but were driven back by the tempest.

At last there springs up a south-west wind, and Antony ventures with his flotilla,—although the war-ships of Pompey still hold the sea, and guard the Illyrian coast. But Cæsar's general is successful, and the second half of the Cæsarean army is carried northward by favouring breezes towards the shore in the very sight of Pompey and his soldiers at Dyrrachium. Two ships, however, lag behind and fall into the hands of one Otacilius, an officer belonging to Pompey. The two ships, one full of recruits and the other of veterans, agree to surrender, Otacilius having sworn that he will not hurt the men. "Here you may see," says Cæsar, "how much safety to men there is in presence of mind." The recruits do as they have undertaken, and give them-

selves up;—whereupon Otacilius, altogether disregarding his oath, like a true Roman, kills every man of them. But the veterans, disregarding their word also, and knowing no doubt to a fraction the worth of the word of Otacilius, run their ship ashore in the night, and, with much fighting, get safe to Antony. Cæsar implies that the recruits even would have known better had they not been sea-sick; but that even bilge-water and bad weather combined had failed to touch the ancient courage of the veteran legionaries. They were still good men—"item conflictati et tempestatis et sentinæ vitiis."

We are then told how Metellus Scipio, coming out of Syria with his legions into Macedonia, almost succeeds in robbing the temple of Diana of Ephesus on his way. He gets together a body of senators, who are to give evidence that he counts the money fairly as he takes it out of the temple. But letters come from Pompey just as he is in the act, and he does not dare to delay his journey even to complete so pleasant a transaction. He comes to meet Pompey and to share his command at the great battle that must soon be fought. We hear, too, how Cæsar sends his lieutenants into Thessaly and Ætolia and Macedonia, to try what friends he has there, to take cities, and to get food. He is now in a land which has seemed specially to belong to Pompey; but even here they have heard of Cæsar, and the Greeks are simply anxious to be friends with the strongest Roman of the day. They have to judge which will win, and to adhere to him. For the poor Greeks there is much difficulty in forming a judg-

ment. Presently we shall see the way in which Cæsar gives a lesson on that subject to the citizens of Gomphi. In the mean time he joins his own forces to those lately brought by Antony out of Italy, and resolves that he will force Pompey to a fight.

We may divide the remainder of this last book of the second Commentary into two episodes,—the first being the story of what occurred within the lines at Petra, and the second the account of the crowning battle of Pharsalia. In the first Pompey was the victor,—but the victory, great as it was, has won from the world very little notice. In the second, as all the world knows, Cæsar was triumphant and henceforward dominant. And yet the affair at Petra should have made a Pharsalia unnecessary, and indeed impossible. Two reasons have conspired to make Pompey's complete success at Petra unimportant in the world's esteem. This Commentary was written not by Pompey but by Cæsar; and then, unfortunately for Pompey, Pharsalia was allowed to follow Petra.

It is not very easy to unravel Cæsar's story of the doings of the two armies at Petra. Nor, were this ever so easy, would our limits or the purport of this little volume allow us to attempt to give that narrative in full to our readers. Cæsar had managed to join the legions which he had himself brought from Italy with those which had crossed afterwards with Antony, and was now anxious for a battle. His men, though fewer in number than they who followed Pompey, were fit for fighting, and knew all the work of soldiering. Pompey's men were for the most part beginners;—but

they were learning, and every week added to their experience was a week in Pompey's favour. With hope of forcing a battle, Cæsar managed to get his army between Dyrrachium, in which were kept all Pompey's stores and wealth of war, and the army of his opponent, so that Pompey, as regarded any approach by land, was shut off from Dyrrachium. But the sea was open to him. His fleet was everywhere on the coast, while Cæsar had not a ship that could dare to show its bow upon the waters.

There was a steep rocky promontory some few miles north of Dyrrachium, from whence there was easy access to the sea, called Petra, or the rock. At this point Pompey could touch the sea, but between Petra and Dyrrachium Cæsar held the country. Here, on this rock, taking in for the use of his army a certain somewhat wide amount of pasturage at the foot of the rock, Pompey placed his army, and made intrenchments all round from sea to sea, fortifying himself, as all Roman generals knew how to do, with a bank and ditch and twenty-four turrets and earthworks that would make the place absolutely impregnable. The length of his lines was fifteen Roman miles,—more than thirteen English miles,—so that within his works he might have as much space as possible to give him grass for his horses. So placed, he had all the world at his back to feed him. Not only could he get at that wealth of stores which he had amassed at Dyrrachium, and which were safe from Cæsar, but the coasts of Greece, and Asia, and Egypt were open to his ships. Two things only were wanting to him,—sufficient grass

for his horses, and water. But all things were wanting to Cæsar,—except grass and water. The Illyrian country at his back was one so unproductive, being rough and mountainous, that the inhabitants themselves were in ordinary times fed upon imported corn. And Pompey, foreseeing something of what might happen, had taken care to empty the storehouses and to leave the towns behind him destitute and impoverished.

Nevertheless Cæsar, having got the body of his enemy, as it were, imprisoned at Petra, was determined to keep his prisoner fast. So round and in front of Pompey's lines he also made other lines, from sea to sea. He began by erecting turrets and placing small detachments on the little hills outside Pompey's lines, so as to prevent his enemy from getting the grass. Then he joined these towers by lines, and in this way surrounded the other lines,—thinking that so Pompey would not be able to send out his horsemen for forage; and again, that the horses inside at Petra might gradually be starved; and again "that the reputation,"—"auctoritatem,"—"which in the estimation of foreign nations belonged chiefly to Pompey in this war, would be lessened when the story should have been told over the world that Pompey had been besieged by Cæsar, and did not dare to fight."

We are, perhaps, too much disposed to think,—reading our history somewhat cursorily,—that Cæsar at this time was everybody, and that Pompey was hardly worthy to be his foe. Such passages in the Commentary as that above translated,—they are not many, but a few suffice,—show that this idea is erroneous. Up

to this period in their joint courses Pompey had been the greater man; Cæsar had done very much, but Pompey had done more—and now he had on his side almost all that was wealthy and respectable in Rome. He led the Conservative party, and was still confident that he had only to bide his time, and that Cæsar must fall before him. Cæsar and the Cæsareans were to him as the spirits of the Revolution were in France to Louis XVI., to Charles X., and to Louis-Philippe, before they had made their powers credible and formidable; as the Reform Bill and Catholic Emancipation were to such men as George IV. and Lord Eldon, while yet they could be opposed and postponed. It was impossible to Pompey that the sweepings of Rome, even with Cæsar and Cæsar's army to help them, should at last prevail over himself and over the Roman Senate. "He was said at that time," we are again translating Cæsar's words, "to have declared with boasts among his own people, that he would not himself deny that as a general he should be considered to be worthless if Cæsar's legions should now extricate themselves from the position in which they had rashly entangled themselves without very great loss"—"maximo detrimento"—loss that should amount wellnigh to destruction. And he was all but right in what he said.

There was a great deal of fighting for the plots of grass and different bits of vantage-ground,—fighting which must have taken place almost entirely between the two lines. But Cæsar suffered under this disadvantage, that his works, being much the longest,

required the greatest number of men to erect them and prolong them and keep them in order; whereas Pompey, who in this respect had the least to do, having the inner line, was provided with much the greater number of men to do it. Cæsar's men, being veterans, had always the advantage in the actual fighting; but in the mean time Pompey's untried soldiers were obtaining that experience which was so much needed by them. Nevertheless Pompey suffered very much. They could not get water on the rock, and when he attempted to sink wells, Cæsar so perverted the water-courses that the wells gave no water. Cæsar tells us that he even dammed up the streams, making little lakes to hold it, so that it should not trickle down in its underground courses to the comfort of his enemies; but we should have thought that any reservoirs so made must soon have overflown themselves, and have been useless for the intended purpose. In the mean time Cæsar's men had no bread but what was made of a certain wild cabbage,—"chara,"—which grew there, which they kneaded up with milk, and lived upon it cheerfully, though it was not very palatable. To show the Pompeians the sort of fare with which real veterans could be content to break their fasts, they threw loaves of this composition across the lines; for they were close together, and could talk to each other, and the Pompeians did not hesitate to twit their enemies with their want of provisions. But the Cæsareans had plenty of water,—and plenty of meat; and they assure Cæsar that they would rather eat the bark off the trees than allow the Pompeians to escape them.

But there was always this for Cæsar to fear,—that Pompey should land a detachment behind his lines and attack him at the back. To hinder this Cæsar made another intrenchment, with ditch and bank, running at right angles from the shore, and was intending to join this to his main work by a transverse line of fortifications running along that short portion of the coast which lay between his first lines and the second, when there came upon him the disaster which nearly destroyed him. While he was digging his trenches and building his turrets the fighting was so frequent that, as Cæsar tells us, on one day there were six battles. Pompey lost two thousand legionaries, while Cæsar lost no more than twenty; but every Cæsarean engaged in a certain turret was wounded, and four officers lost their eyes. Cæsar estimates that thirty thousand arrows were thrown upon the men defending this tower, and tells us of one Scæva, an officer, who had two hundred and thirty holes made by these arrows in his own shield.* We can only sur-

* Dean Merivale in his account of this affair reduces the number of holes in Scæva's shield to one hundred and twenty, —on the joint authority, no doubt, of Florus and Valerius Maximus; but Florus lived 200 and Val. Max. 300 years after Cæsar. Suetonius allows the full number of holes, but implies that 120 were received while the warrior was fighting in one place, and 110 while fighting in another. Lucan sings the story of Scæva at great length, but does not give the number of wounds in the shield. He seems to say that Scæva was killed on this occasion, but is not quite clear on the point. That Scæva had one eye knocked out is certain. Lucan does indeed tell us, in the very last lines of his poem, that in Egypt Cæsar once again saw his beloved centurion;—but at the moment described

mise that it must have been a very big shield, and that there must have been much trouble in counting the holes. Cæsar, however, was so much pleased that he gave Scæva a large sum of money,—something over £500, and, allowing him to skip over six intermediate ranks, made him at once first centurion—or Primipilus of the legion. We remember no other record of such quick promotion—in prose. There is, indeed, the well-known case of a common sailor who did a gallant action and was made first-lieutenant on the spot; but that is told in verse, and the common sailor was a lady.

Two perfidious Gauls to whom Cæsar had been very kind, but whom he had been obliged to check on account of certain gross peculations of which they had been guilty, though, as he tells us, he had not time to punish them, went over to Pompey, and told Pompey all the secrets of Cæsar's ditches, and forts, and mounds, —finished and unfinished. Before that, Cæsar assures us, not a single man of his had gone over to the enemy, though many of the enemy had come to him. But those perfidious Gauls did a world of mischief. Pompey, hearing how far Cæsar was from having his works along the sea-shore finished, got together a huge fleet of boats, and succeeded at night in throwing a large body of his men ashore between Cæsar's two lines, thus dividing Cæsar's forces, and coming upon them in their weakest

even Cæsar was dismayed, and the commentators doubt whether it was not Scæva's ghost that Cæsar then saw. Valerius Maximus is sure that Scæva was killed when he got the wounds;—but, if so, how could he have been rewarded and promoted? The matter has been very much disputed; but here it has been thought best to adhere to Cæsar.

point. Cæsar admits that there was a panic in his lines, and that the slaughter of his men was very great. It seems that the very size of his own works produced the ruin which befel them, for the different parts of them were divided one from another, so that the men in one position could not succour those in another. The affair ended in the total rout of the Cæsarean army. Cæsar actually fled, and had Pompey followed him we must suppose that then there would have been an end of Cæsar. He acknowledges that in the two battles fought on that day he lost 960 legionaries, 32 officers, and 32 standards.

And then Cæsar tells us a story of Labienus, who had been his most trusted lieutenant in the Gallic wars, but who had now gone over to Pompey, not choosing to fight against the Republic. Labienus demanded of Pompey the Cæsarean captives, and caused them all to be slaughtered, asking them with scorn whether veterans such as they were accustomed to run away. Cæsar is very angry with Labienus; but Labienus might have defended himself by saying that the slaughter of prisoners of war was a custom he had learned in Gaul. As for those words of scorn, Cæsar could hardly have heard them with his own ears, and we can understand that he should take delight in saying a hard thing of Labienus.

Pompey was at once proclaimed Imperator. And Pompey used the name, though the victory had, alas! been gained over his fellow-countrymen. "So great was the effect of all this on the spirits and confidence of the Pompeians, that they thought no more of the carrying on of the war, but only of the victory

they had gained." And then Cæsar throws scorn upon the Pompeians, making his own apology in the same words. "They did not care to remember that the small number of our soldiers was the cause of their triumph, or that the unevenness of the ground and narrowness of the defiles had aught to do with it; or the occupation of our lines, and the panic of our men between their double fortifications; or our army cut into two parts, so that one part could not help the other. Nor did they add to this the fact that our men, pressed as they were, could not engage themselves in a fair conflict, and that they indeed suffered more from their own numbers, and from the narrowness of the ravines, than from the enemy. Nor were the ordinary chances of war brought to mind,—how small matters, such as some unfounded suspicion, a sudden panic, a remembered superstition, may create great misfortune; nor how often the fault of a general, or the mistake of an officer, may bring injury upon an army. But they spread abroad the report of the victory of that day throughout all the world, sending forth letters and tales as though they had conquered solely by their own valour, nor was it possible that there should after this be a reverse of their circumstances." Such was the affair of Petra, by which the relative position in the world-history of Cæsar and Pompey was very nearly made the reverse of what it is.

Cæsar now acknowledges that he is driven to change the whole plan of his campaign. He addresses a speech to his men, and explains to them that this defeat, like that at Gergovia, may lead to their future

success. The victory at Alesia had sprung from the defeat of Gergovia, because the Gauls had been induced to fight; and from the reverses endured within the lines of Petra might come the same fortune;—for surely now the army of Pompey would not fear a battle. Some few officers he punishes and degrades. His own words respecting his army after their defeat are very touching. "So great a grief had come from this disaster upon the whole army, and so strong a desire of repairing its disgrace, that no one now desired the place of tribune or centurion in his legion; and all, by way of self-imposed punishment, subjected themselves to increased toil; and every man burned with a desire to fight. Some from the higher ranks were so stirred by Cæsar's speech, that they thought that they should stand their ground where they were, and fight where they stood." But Cæsar was too good a general for that. He moves on towards the south-east, and in retreating gets the better of Pompey, who follows him with only half a heart. After a short while Pompey gives up the pursuit. His father-in-law, Scipio, has brought a great army from the east, and is in Thessaly. As we read this we cannot fail to remember how short a time since it was that Cæsar himself was Pompey's father-in-law, and that Pompey was Cæsar's friend because, with too uxorious a love, he clung to Julia, his young wife. Pompey now goes eastward to unite his army to that of Scipio; and Cæsar, making his way also into Thessaly by a more southern route, joins certain forces under his lieutenant Calvinus, who had been watching Scipio,

and who barely escaped falling into Pompey's hands before he could reach Cæsar. But wherever Fortune or Chance could interfere, the Gods were always kind to Cæsar.

Then Cæsar tells us of his treatment of two towns in Thessaly, Gomphi and Metropolis. Unluckily for the poor Gomphians, Cæsar reaches Gomphi first. Now the fame of Pompey's victory at Petra had been spread abroad; and the Gomphians, who,—to give them their due,—would have been just as willing to favour Cæsar as Pompey, and who only wanted to be on the winning side that they might hold their little own in safety, believed that things were going badly with Cæsar. They therefore shut their gates against Cæsar, and sent off messengers to Pompey. They can hold their town against Cæsar for a little while, but Pompey must come quickly to their aid. Pompey comes by no means quick enough, and the Gomphians' capacity to hold their own is very short-lived. At about three o'clock in the afternoon Cæsar begins to besiege the town, and before sunset he has taken it, and given it to be sacked by his soldiers. The men of Metropolis were also going to shut their gates, but luckily they hear just in time what had happened at Gomphi,—and open them instead. Whereupon Cæsar showers protection upon Metropolis; and all the other towns of Thessaly, hearing what had been done, learn what Cæsar's favour means.

Pompey, having joined his army to that of Scipio, shares all his honours with his father-in-law. When we hear this we know that Pompey's position was not

comfortable, and that he was under constraint. He was a man who would share his honour with no one unless driven to do so. And indeed his command at present was not a pleasant one. It was much for a Roman commander to have with him the Roman Senate,—but the senators so placed would be apt to be less obedient than trained soldiers. They even accuse him of keeping them in Thessaly because he likes to lord it over such followers. But they were, nevertheless, all certain that Cæsar was about to be destroyed; and, even in Pompey's camp, they quarrel over the rewards of victory which they think that they will enjoy at Rome when their oligarchy shall have been re-established by Pompey's arms.

Before the great day arrives Labienus again appears on the scene; and Cæsar puts into his mouth a speech which he of course intends us to compare with the result of the coming battle. "Do not think, O Pompey, that this is the army which conquered Gaul and Germany,"—where Labienus himself was second in command under Cæsar. "I was present at all those battles, and speak of a thing which I know. A very small part of that army remains. Many have perished,—as a matter of course in so many battles. The autumn pestilence killed many in Italy. Many have gone home. Many have been left on the other shore. Have you not heard from our own friends who remained behind sick, that these cohorts of Cæsar's were made up at Brindisi?"—made up but the other day, Labienus implies. "This army, indeed, has been renewed from levies in the two Gauls; but all that it

had of strength perished in those two battles at Dyrrachium;"—in the contests, that is, within the lines of Petra. Upon this Labienus swears that he will not sleep under canvas again until he sleeps as victor over Cæsar; and Pompey swears the same, and everybody swears. Then they all go away full of the coming victory. We daresay there was a great deal of false confidence; but as for the words which Cæsar puts into the mouth of Labienus, we know well how much cause Cæsar had to dislike Labienus, and we doubt whether they were ever spoken.

At length the battle-field is chosen,—near the town of Pharsalus, on the banks of the river Enipeus in Thessaly. The battle has acquired world-wide fame as that of Pharsalia, which we have been taught to regard as the name of the plain on which it was fought. Neither of these names occur in the Commentary, nor does that of the river; and the actual spot on which the great contest took place seems to be a matter of doubt even now. The ground is Turkish soil,—near to the mountains which separate modern Greece from Turkey, and is not well adapted for the researches of historical travellers. Cæsar had been keeping his men on the march close to Pompey, till Pompey found that he could no longer abstain from fighting. Then came Labienus with his vaunts, and his oath,—and at length the day and the field were chosen. Cæsar at any rate was ready. At this time Cæsar was fifty-two years old, and Pompey was five years his elder.

Cæsar tells us that Pompey had 110 cohorts, or eleven legions. Had the legions been full, Pompey's army

would have contained 66,000 legionaries; but Cæsar states their number at 45,000, or something over two-thirds of the full number. He does not forget to tell us once again that among these eleven were the two legions which he had given up in obedience to the demand of the Senate. Pompey himself, with these two very legions, placed himself on the left away from the river; and there also were all his auxiliaries,—not counted with the legionaries,—slingers, archers, and cavalry. Scipio commanded in the centre with the legions he had brought out of Syria. So Cæsar tells us. We learn from other sources that Lentulus commanded Pompey's right wing, lying on the river—and Domitius, whom we remember as trying to hold Marseilles against young Brutus and Trebonius, the left. Cæsar had 80 cohorts, or eight legions, which should have numbered 48,000 men had his legions been full; —but, as he tells us, he led but 22,000 legionaries, so that his ranks were deficient by more than a half. As was his custom, he had his tenth legion to the right, away from the river. The ninth, terribly thinned by what had befallen it within the lines at Petra, joined to the eleventh, lay next the river, forming part of Cæsar's left wing. Antony commanded the left wing, Domitius Calvinus, whom Cæsar sometimes calls by one name and sometimes by the other, the centre,—and Sulla the right. Cæsar placed himself to the right, with his tenth legion, opposite to Pompey. As far as we can learn, there was but little in the nature of the ground to aid either of them;—and so the fight began.

There is not much complication, and perhaps no

great interest, in the account of the actual battle as it is given by Cæsar. Cæsar makes a speech to his army, which was, as we have already learned, and as he tells us now, the accustomed thing to do. No falser speech was ever made by man, if he spoke the words which he himself reports. He first of all reminds them how they themselves are witnesses that he has done his best to insure peace;—and then he calls to their memory certain mock treaties as to peace, in which, when seeking delay, he had pretended to engage himself and his enemy. He had never wasted, he told them, the blood of his soldiers, nor did he desire to deprive the Republic of either army—"alterutro exercitu"—of Pompey's army or of his own. They were both Roman, and far be it from him to destroy aught belonging to the Republic. We must acknowledge that Cæsar was always chary of Roman life and Roman blood. He would spare it when it could be spared; but he could spill it like water when the spilling of it was necessary to his end. He was very politic; but as for tenderness,—neither he nor any Roman knew what it was.

Then there is a story of one Crastinus, who declares that whether dead or alive he will please Cæsar. He throws the first weapon against the enemy and does please Cæsar. But he has to please by his death, for he is killed in his effort.

Pompey orders that his first rank shall not leave its order to advance, but shall receive the shock of Cæsar's attack. Cæsar points out to us that he is wrong in this, because the very excitement of a first attack gives increased energy and strength to the men. Cæsar's

legionaries are told to attack, and they rush over the space intervening between the first ranks to do so. But they are so well trained that they pause and catch their breath before they throw their weapons. Then they throw their piles and draw their swords, and the ranks of the two armies are close pitted against each other.

But Pompey had thought that he could win the battle, almost without calling on his legionaries for any exertion, by the simple strategic movement of his numerous cavalry and auxiliaries. He outnumbered Cæsar altogether, but in these arms he could overwhelm him with a cloud of horsemen and of archers. But Cæsar also had known of these clouds. He fought now as always with a triple rank of legionaries,—but behind his third rank,—or rather somewhat to their right shoulder,—he had drawn up a choice body of men picked from his third line, — a fourth line as it were, —whose business it was to stand against Pompey's clouds when the attempt should be made by these clouds upon their right flank. Cæsar's small body of cavalry did give way before the Pompeian clouds, and the horsemen and the archers and the slingers swept round upon Cæsar's flank. But they swept round upon destruction. Cæsar gave the word to that fourth line of picked men. "Illi—they," says Cæsar, "ran forward with the greatest rapidity, and with their standards in advance attacked the cavalry of Pompey with such violence that none of them could stand their ground;—so that all not only were forced from the ground, but being at once driven in panic, they sought the shelter of the highest mountains near them. And

when they were thus removed, all the archers and the slingers, desolate and unarmed, without any one to take care of them, were killed in heaps." Such is Cæsar's account of Pompey's great attack of cavalry which was to win the battle without giving trouble to the legions.

Cæsar acknowledges that Pompey's legionaries drew their swords bravely and began their share of the fighting well. Then at once he tells us of the failure on the part of the cavalry and of the slaughter of the poor auxiliary slingers, and in the very next sentence gives us to understand that the battle was won. Though Pompey's legions were so much more numerous than those of Cæsar, we are told that Cæsar's third line attacked the Pompeian legionaries when they were "defessi"—worn out. The few cohorts of picked men who in such marvellous manner had dispersed Pompey's clouds, following on their success, turned the flank of Pompey's legions and carried the day. That it was all as Cæsar says there can be little doubt. That he won the battle there can, we presume, be no doubt. Pompey at once flew to his camp and endeavoured to defend it. But such defence was impossible, and Pompey was driven to seek succour in flight. He found a horse and a few companions, and did not stop till he was on the sea-shore. Then he got on board a provision-vessel, and was heard to complain that he had been betrayed by those very men from whose hands he had expected victory.

We are told with much picturesque effect how Cæsar's men, hungry, accustomed to endurance, patient in all their want, found Pompey's camp prepared for

victory, and decked in luxurious preparation for the senatorial victors. Couches were strewn, and plate was put out, and tables prepared, and the tents of these happy ones were adorned with fresh ivy. The senatorial happy ones have but a bad time of it, either perishing in their flight, or escaping into the desert solitudes of the mountains. Cæsar follows up his conquest, and on the day after the battle compels the great body of the fugitives to surrender at discretion. He surrounds them on the top of a hill and shuts them out from water, and they do surrender at discretion. With stretched-out hands, prone upon the earth, these late conquerors, the cream of the Roman power, who had so lately sworn to conquer ere they slept, weeping beg for mercy. Cæsar, having said a few words to them of his clemency, gave them their lives. He recommends them to the care of his own men, and desires that they may neither be slaughtered nor robbed.

Cæsar says he lost only 200 soldiers in that battle —and among them 30 officers, all brave men. That gallant Crastinus was among the 30. Of Pompey's army 15,000 had been killed, and 24,000 had surrendered! 180 standards and 9 eagles were taken and brought to Cæsar. The numbers seem to us to be almost incredible, whether we look at those given to us in regard to the conqueror or the conquered. Cæsar's account, however, of that day's work has hitherto been taken as authoritative, and it is too late now to question it. After this fashion was the battle of Pharsalia won, and the so-called Roman Republic brought to an end.

But Cæsar by no means thought that his work was

done;—nor indeed was it nearly done. It was now clearly his first duty to pursue Pompey,—whom, should he escape, the outside provinces and distant allies of the Republic would soon supply with another army. "Cæsar thought that Pompey was to be pursued to the neglecting of all other things." In the mean time Pompey, who seems to have been panic-struck by his misfortune, fled with a few friends down the Ægean Sea, picked his young wife up at an island as he went, and made his way to Egypt. The story of his murder by those who had the young King of Egypt in their keeping is well known and need not detain us. Cæsar tells it very shortly. Pompey sends to young Ptolemy for succour and assistance, trusting to past friendship between himself and the young king's father. Ptolemy is in the hands of eunuchs, adventurers, and cut-throat soldiers, and has no voice of his own in the matter. But these ruffians think it well to have Pompey out of the way, and therefore they murder him. Achillas, a royal satrap, and Septimius, a Roman soldier, go out to Pompey's vessel, as messengers from the king, and induce him to come down into their boat. Then, in the very sight of his wife, he is slaughtered, and his head is carried away as proof of the deed. Such was the end of Pompey, for whom no fortune had seemed to be too great, till Cæsar came upon the scene. We are told by the Roman poet, Lucan, who took the battle of Pharsalia as his difficult theme, that Cæsar could bear no superior, and Pompey no equal. The poet probably wished to make the latter the more magnanimous by the comparison. To us, as we examine the character of the two generals, Cæsar seems

at least as jealous of power as his son-in-law, and certainly was the more successful of the two in extruding all others from a share in the power which he coveted. Pompey in the triumvirate admitted his junior to more, as he must have felt it, than equal power: Cæsar in the triumvirate simply made a stepping-stone of the great man who was his elder. Pompey at Thessaly was forced to divide at least the name of his power with Scipio, his last father-in-law: but Cæsar never gave a shred of his mantle to be worn by another soldier.

In speaking, however, of the character of Pompey, and in comparing it with that of his greater rival, it may probably be said of him that in all his contests, both military and political, he was governed by a love of old Rome, and of the Republic as the greatest national institution which the world had ever known, and by a feeling which we call patriotism, and of which Cæsar was,—perhaps, we may say, too great to be capable. Pompey desired to lead, but to lead the beloved Republic. Cæsar, caring nothing for the things of old, with no reverence for the past, utterly destitute of that tenderness for our former footsteps which makes so many of us cling with passionate fondness to convicted errors, desired to create out of the dust of the Republic,—which fate and his genius allowed him to recast as he would,—something which should be better and truer than the Republic.

The last seven chapters of the third book of this Commentary form a commencement of the record of the Alexandrine war, — which, beyond those seven chapters, Cæsar himself did not write. That he

should have written any Commentary amidst the necessary toils of war, and the perhaps more pressing emergencies of his political condition, is one of the greatest marvels of human power. He tells us now, that having delayed but a few days in Asia, he followed Pompey first to Cyprus and then to Egypt, taking with him as his entire army three thousand two hundred men. "The rest, worn out with wounds, and battles, and toil, and the greatness of the journey, could not follow him." But he directed that legions should be made up for him from the remnants of Pompey's broken army, and, with a godlike trust in the obedience of absent vassals, he went on to Egypt. He tells us that he was kept in Alexandria by Etesian winds. But we know also that Cleopatra came to him at Alexandria, requiring his services in her contest for the crown of Egypt; and knowing at what price she bought them, we doubt the persistent malignity of the Etesian winds. Had Cleopatra been a swarthy Nubian, as some have portrayed her, Cæsar, we think, would have left Alexandria though the Etesian winds had blown in his very teeth. All winds filled Cæsar's sails. Cæsar gets possession of Cleopatra's brother Ptolemy, who, in accordance with their father's will, was to have reigned in conjunction with his sister, and the Alexandrians rise against him in great force. He slays Photinus, the servant of King Ptolemy, has his own ambassador slain, and burns the royal fleet of Egypt,—burning with it, unfortunately, the greater part of the royal library. "These things were the beginning of the Alexandrine war." These are the last words of Cæsar's last Commentary.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING concluded his ten short chapters descriptive of the ten books of the Commentaries written by Cæsar himself, the author of this little volume has finished his intended task,—and as he is specially anxious not to be thought to have made an attempt at writing history, he would not add any concluding words, were it not that three other Commentaries of Cæsar's three other wars were added to Cæsar's Commentaries by other writers. There is the Commentary on the Alexandrine war,—written probably by Hirtius, the author of the last book of the Gallic war; and two Commentaries on the African war and the Spanish war,—written, as the critics seem to think, by one Oppius, a friend whom Cæsar loved and trusted. The Alexandrine war was a war of itself, in which Cæsar was involved by his matchless audacity in following Pompey into Egypt, and perhaps by the sweetness of Cleopatra's charms. And this led also to a war in Asia Minor, the account of which is included with that of his Egyptian campaign. The African war, and that afterwards

carried on in Spain with the object of crushing out the sparks of Pompeian revolt against his power, are simply the latter portions of the civil war, and their records might have been written as chapters added to the Commentary "De Bello Civili."

Alexandria, when Cæsar landed there in pursuit of Pompey and had offered to him as a graceful tribute on his first arrival the head of his murdered rival, was a city almost as populous and quite as rich as Rome; and in the city, and throughout the more fertile parts of Egypt, there was a crowd of Roman soldiers left there to support and to overawe the throne of the Ptolemies. Cæsar, with hardly more than half a full legion to support him, enters Alexandria as though obedience were due to him by all in Egypt as Roman consul. He at once demands an enormous sum of money, which he claims as due to himself personally for services rendered to a former Ptolemy; he takes possession of the person of Ptolemy the young king,—and is taken possession of by Cleopatra, the young king's sister, who was joint-heir with her brother to the throne. In all his career there was perhaps nothing more audacious than his conduct in Egypt. The Alexandrians, or rather perhaps the Roman army in Egypt under the leading of the young king's satraps, rise against Cæsar, and he is compelled to fortify himself in the town. He contrives, however, to burn all the Egyptian fleet, and with it unfortunately the royal library, as we were told by himself at the end of the last Commentary. He at length allows Ptolemy to go, giving him back to the Egyptians, and thinking that the young king's presence

may serve to allay the enmity of the Alexandrians. The young king wept at leaving Cæsar, and declared that even his own kingdom was not so dear to him as the companionship of Cæsar. But the crafty false-faced boy turns against Cæsar as soon as he is free to do so. Cæsar never was in greater danger; and as one reads one feels one's self to be deprived of the right to say that no more insane thing was ever done than Cæsar did when he swaggered into Alexandria without an army at his back,—only by the remembrance that Cæsar was Cæsar. First, because he wanted some ready money, and secondly, because Cleopatra was pretty, Cæsar nearly lost the world in Egypt.

But there comes to his help a barbarian ally,—a certain Mithridates of Pergamus, a putative son of the great Mithridates of Pontus. Mithridates brings an army to Cæsar's rescue, and does rescue him. A great battle is fought on the Nile,—a battle which would have been impossible to Cæsar had not Mithridates come to his aid,—and the Egyptians are utterly dispersed. Young Ptolemy is drowned; Cleopatra is settled on her throne; and Egypt becomes subject to Cæsar. Then Cæsar hurries into Asia, finding it necessary to quell the arrogance of a barbarian who had dared to defeat a Roman general. The unfortunate conqueror is Pharnaces, the undoubted son of Mithridates of Pontus. But Cæsar comes, and sees, and conquers. He engages Pharnaces at Zela, and destroys his army; and then, we are told, inscribed upon his banners those insolent words—"Veni, vidi, vici." He had already been made Dictator of the Roman Empire for an entire year, and had

revelled with Cleopatra at Alexandria, and was becoming a monarch.

These were the campaigns of the year 47 B.C., and the record of them is made in the Commentary "De Bello Alexandrino."

In the mean time things have not been going altogether smoothly for Cæsar in Italy, although his friends at Rome have made him Dictator. His soldiers have mutinied against their officers, and against his authority; and a great company of Pompeians is collected in that province of Africa in which poor Curio was conquered by Juba,—when Juba had Roman senators walking in his train, and Cæsar's army was destroyed. The province called by the name of Africa lay just opposite to Sicily, and was blessed with that Roman civilisation which belonged to the possessions of the Republic which were nearest to Rome, the great centre of all things. It is now the stronghold of the Republican faction,—as being the one spot of Roman ground in which Cæsar had failed of success. Pompey, indeed, is no more, but Pompey's two sons are here,—and Scipio, Pompey's father-in-law, whom Pompey had joined with himself in the command at Pharsalus. Labienus is here, who, since he turned from Cæsar, has been more Pompeian than Pompey himself; and Afranius, to whom Cæsar was so kind in Spain; and Petreius and King Juba,—of whom a joint story has yet to be told; and Varus, who held the province against Curio;—and last of all there is that tower of strength, the great Cato, the most virtuous and impracticable of men, who, in spite of his virtue, is always in the wrong, and of

whom the world at large only remembers that he was fond of wine, and that he destroyed himself at Utica.

They are all at Utica,—and to them for the present Utica is Rome. They establish a Senate; and Scipio, who is unworthy of the great name he bears, and is incompetent as a general, is made commander-in-chief, because Cato decides that law and routine so require. Scipio had been consul,—had been joint commander with Pompey,—and his rank is the highest. The same argument had been used when he was joined in that command,—that it was fitting that such power should be given to him because he was of consular rank. The command of the Republican fleet had been intrusted to Bibulus on the same ground. We never hear of Cæsar so bestowing promotion. He indeed is now and again led away by another fault, trusting men simply because he loves them,—by what we may call favouritism,—as he did when he allowed Curio to lose his army in Africa, and thus occasioned all this subsequent trouble. As we read of Scipio's rank we remember that we have heard of similar cause for ill-judged promotion in later times. The Pompeians, however, collect an enormous army. They have ten Roman legions, and are supported, moreover, by the whole force of King Juba. This army, we are told, is as numerous as that which Pompey commanded at Pharsalus. There is quarrelling among them for authority; quarrelling as to strategy; jealousy as to the barbarian, with acknowledged inability to act without him;—and the reader feels that it is all in vain. Cæsar comes, having quelled the mutiny of his own old veterans in Italy by a few

words. He has gone among them fearing nothing; they demand their discharge—he grants it. They require the rewards which they think to be their due, and he tells them that they shall have their money,—when he has won it with other legions. Then he addresses them not as soldiers, but as "citizens"—"Quirites;" and that they cannot stand; it implies that they are no longer the invincible soldiers of Cæsar. They rally round him; the legions are re-formed, and he lands in Africa with a small army indeed,—at first with little more than three thousand men,—and is again nearly destroyed in the very first battle. But after a few months campaigning the old story has to be told again. A great battle is fought at Thapsus, a year and five months after that of Pharsalia, and the Republic is routed again and for ever. The commentator tells us that on this occasion the ferocity of Cæsar's veterans was so great, that by no entreaties, by no commands, could they be induced to cease from the spilling of blood.

But of the destruction of the leaders separate stories are told us. Of Cato is the first story, and that best known to history. He finds himself obliged to surrender the town of Utica to Cæsar; and then, "he himself having carefully settled his own affairs, and having commended his children to Lucius Cæsar, who was then acting with him as his quæstor, with his usual gait and countenance, so as to cause no suspicion, he took his sword with him into his bedroom when it was his time to retire to rest,—and so killed himself." Scipio also killed himself. Afranius was killed by Cæsar's soldiers. Labienus, and the two sons of Pom-

pey, and Varus, escaped into Spain. Then comes the story of King Juba and Petreius. Juba had collected his wives and children, and all his wealth of gold and jewels and rich apparel, into a town of his called Zama; and there he had built a vast funeral-pile, on which, in the event of his being conquered by Cæsar, he intended to perish,—meaning that his wives and children and dependants and rich treasures should all be burned with him. So, when he was defeated, he returned to Zama; but his wives and children and dependants, being less magnificently minded than their king, and knowing his royal purpose, and being unwilling to become ornaments to his euthanasia, would not let him enter the place. Then he went to his old Roman friend Petreius, and they two sat down together to supper. Petreius was he who would not allow Afranius to surrender to Cæsar at Lerida. When they have supped, Juba proposes that they shall fight each other, so that one at least may die gloriously. They do fight, and Petreius is quickly killed. "Juba being the stronger, easily destroyed the weaker Petreius with his sword." Then the barbarian tried to kill himself; but, failing, got a slave to finish the work. The battle of Thapsus was fought, B.C. 47. Numidia is made a province by Cæsar, and so Africa is won. We may say that the Roman Republic died with Cato at Utica.

The Spanish war, which afforded matter for the last Commentary, is a mere stamping out of the embers. Cæsar, after the affair in Africa, goes to Rome; and the historian begins his chronicle by telling us that he is detained there "muneribus dandis,"—by the distribu-

tion of rewards,—keeping his promise, no doubt, to those veterans whom he won back to their military obedience by calling them "Quirites," or Roman citizens.* The sons of Pompey, Cnæus and Sextus, have collected together a great number of men to support their worn-out cause, and we are told that in the battle of Munda more than 30,000 men perished. But that was the end of it. Labienus and Varus are killed; and the historian tells us that a funeral was made for them. One Scapula, of whom it is said that he was the promoter of all this Spanish rebellion, eats his supper, has himself anointed, and is killed on his funeral-pile. Cnæus, the elder son of Pompey, escapes wounded, but at last is caught in a cave, and is killed. Sextus, the younger, escapes, and becomes a leading rebel for some years longer, till at last he also is killed by one of Antony's officers.

This Commentary is ended, or rather is brought to an untimely close, in the middle of a speech which Cæsar makes to the inhabitants of Hipsala,—Seville,—in which he tells them in strong language how well he behaves to them, and how very badly they have be-

* Not in the Commentary, but elsewhere, we learn that he now triumphed four times, for four different victories, taking care to claim none for any victory won over Roman soldiers. On four different days he was carried through the city with his legions and his spoils and his captives. His first triumph was for the Gallic wars; and on that day Vercingetorix, the gallant Gaul whom we remember, and who had now been six years in prison, was strangled to do Cæsar honour. I think we hate Cæsar the more for his cruelty to those who were not Romans, because policy induced him to spare his countrymen.

haved to him. But we reach an abrupt termination in the middle of a sentence.

After the battle of Munda Cæsar returned to Rome, and enjoyed one year of magnificent splendour and regal power in Rome. He is made Consul for ten years, and Dictator for life. He is still high priest, and at last is called King. He makes many laws, and perhaps adds the crowning jewel to his imperishable diadem of glory by reforming the calendar, and establishing a proper rotation of months and days, so as to comprise a properly-divided year. But as there is no Commentary of this year of Cæsar's life, our readers will not expect that we should treat of it here. How he was struck to death by Brutus, Cassius, and the other conspirators, and fell at the foot of Pompey's statue, gathering his garments around him gracefully, with a policy that was glorious and persistent to the last, is known to all men and women.

> "Then burst his mighty heart;
> And in his mantle muffling up his face,
> Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
> Which all the while ran blood, Great Cæsar fell."

That he had done his work, and that he died in time to save his name and fame from the evil deeds of which unlimited power in the State would too probably have caused the tyrant to be guilty, was perhaps not the least fortunate circumstance in a career which for good fortune has been unequalled in history.

THE END.

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TACITUS

BY

WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE writer desires to express his obligations to Dean Merivale for the permission granted by him to employ the 'History of the Romans under the Empire' as a guide in many portions of this book. Also, he acknowledges his debt to Messrs Church & Brodribb for their kind consent—conveyed by their publishers, Messrs Macmillan & Co. — to his availing himself of their admirable translations of the 'Agricola,' 'Germany,' and 'History' of Tacitus. For the 'Annals,' the Oxford translation, and, on one or two occasions, Mr Murphy's, have been used. In the chapter entitled "The Orators," the citations are a paraphrase, not a translation.

That a far larger space is assigned to the 'History' than to the 'Annals' may require some explanation.

The earlier written of these works is generally the far less commonly known of the two. The later, besides its length, demands far more scrutiny and sifting than the 'History,' and to be fairly represented, would have required more space than could be afforded—perhaps even a volume of the series for itself alone.

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TACITUS.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF TACITUS.

THE birth-year of Tacitus can only be conjectured—indeed the little that is known of him personally is mostly derived from the letters of his friend, the younger Pliny, the date of whose birth helps us towards at least surmising that of the historian. Pliny was born in 61 or 62 A.D., since he was in his eighteenth year when the famous eruption of Vesuvius took place, A.D. 79. Now, in a letter from him to Tacitus, he writes: "When I was a very young man, and you were at the height of your fame and reputation, I earnestly desired to imitate you." The historian himself affords us a few glimpses at his public life. "My elevation," he says, "was begun by Vespasian." Again, we know on his own authority that he was prætor in 88 A.D., and on that of Pliny that he was consul in 97. Comparing these statements with each other, it is perhaps not rash to infer that Tacitus was by several years Pliny's senior. We are therefore inclined to fix 51 instead of 54 A.D.—the date usually assigned—as the year in which he was born.

His birthplace is unknown, nor can anything certain be told about his family. Some circumstances make it likely that the members of it were well to do in the world, if not highly distinguished, at least until he made the name of Tacitus memorable for all times. He rose rapidly in his public career; and that is hard for obscure and needy men to do. He married into a family of some rank; and in his writings he displays no token of the poverty that made his contemporaries, Martial and Juvenal, the one a flatterer of the great, the other a satirist of the wealthy and well-born. His abode, in early years at least, and possibly until he had passed middle life, was apparently either in Rome or its immediate neighbourhood. For not only would his practice at the bar, and the public offices held by him, make it necessary to have a house in the capital, but there are some indications of his being in it even at the time of Galba's death. The 'History' bears several traces of his presence in Rome during that disastrous year in which four emperors contended for the purple, and, all but one, found the reward of their ambition in a violent or a voluntary death.

The public life of Tacitus dates from the later years of Vespasian's reign. His second patron was Titus Flavius, who, happily for himself, did not live long enough to forfeit his title of "Delight of Mankind." Not until we come to the fourteenth year of Domitian do we stand on firm ground as to his preferments. It is not easy to understand his relations to the third of the Flavian Cæsars. "I deny not," he says, "that my elevation was begun by Vespasian, continued by Titus, and still farther advanced by Domitian." So far, then, all the Flavian Cæsars and Tacitus were on

good terms. Yet if the character he draws of Domitian in the 'Agricola,' or where there is occasion to mention him in the 'History,' be a portrait and not a caricature, it is hard to conceive how he managed to serve such a master without flattering him as Martial, Statius, and other poets of the age did; or, if he did not flatter him, how he contrived to keep his head on his shoulders. There is no doubt that in the year 88 he was Prætor, and assisted as one of the fifteen officials (*quindecemviri*) at the celebration of the secular games in that year.

Eleven years earlier, in 77, Tacitus was betrothed to the daughter of Julius Agricola, and in the next year they were married, just before his father-in-law left Rome to govern Britain. It is pleasant to infer from his writings that his marriage was a happy one; or that at least he had no cause for repenting of it. Speaking of his betrothed he says of her that she was "even then a maiden of noble promise." Both Agricola and his son-in-law were, to all appearance, fortunate in their partners for life. Not many of his friends and acquaintance were perhaps so lucky, since it was an age when to divorce a wife or a husband was nearly as common as to take one, if there be any truth in the verse of Martial or Juvenal, or in the anecdotes of Suetonius. A son who died in his infancy was the only fruit of Tacitus's marriage. The emperor of that name is reported to have claimed to be a descendant of the historian; and Sidonius Apollinaris, a writer in the fifth century of our era, addresses a letter to Polemius in which he reminds him of his illustrious ancestor, Tacitus. On grounds equally slender a father has been found for the historian, one

Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman knight and procurator in Belgic Gaul, mentioned by the elder Pliny. Yet it is strange that the younger Pliny never alludes to the procurator, who from his position can hardly have been a person quite obscure. In fact, Tacitus was not an unprecedented name, and Cornelius was a very common one in Italy.

On the expiration of his prætorship he would seem to have left Rome, and not to have returned to it until after Agricola's death, A.D. 93—an absence of at least four years. If he followed the ordinary course, he would be appointed on the expiration of his office to some provincial government. But whither he went, or how he employed himself during his absence from the capital, is not on record.

Credible testimony there is, conveyed by himself, that he was at Rome during the later and the worse period of Domitian's reign. "Our hands" (those of the senators), he writes in his 'Life of Agricola,' "dragged Helvidius to prison; we witnessed the fate of Mauricus and Rusticus; we were steeped in Senecio's innocent blood." Now and then the description of signal and stirring events is so vivid in Tacitus's pages that it is difficult not to believe them to have been traced by the hand of an eyewitness. The passage of the 'Agricola' just cited bears the marks of his presence in the senate when Domitian's victims were dragged away to die.

And yet, in spite of the doubt and darkness that hang over his personal history, Tacitus was a "celebrity" in Italy at least, and in the literary circles of Rome. That he was so is plain from the often-repeated story of the recognition of his name by a stranger to his

person. The stranger and himself happened to sit beside each other among the spectators of the games of the Circus, and for some time relieved the tediousness of familiar and brutal exhibitions by discussing literary subjects. The stranger, a Roman knight, at length asked his neighbour on the bench whether he were a Roman or a provincial? Tacitus replied, "You are acquainted with me and by my pursuits." "Are you, then," was the rejoinder, "Tacitus or Pliny?" But such notoriety was probably due to his reputation as an orator, not as an historian. His 'Agricola' and 'Germany' alone were not likely to have carried his name so widely abroad as this anecdote implies, and the 'Annals' and 'History' were never ranked among the popular literature of either the capital or the provinces.

With Domitian expired, and for a long series of years, the worst effects of Cæsarianism; and the Roman world, for the first time since the death of Augustus, enjoyed the advantages of a strong and just though still irresponsible government. The senate was once again treated with respect, was relieved from anxiety about the lives or property of its members, was intrusted with a large share in the administration of public affairs, and found in the emperor a president, and not a master or an assassin. "Now, at last," writes Tacitus, exulting in his relief from personal fears for his friends or himself, "our spring is returning. We enjoy the rare happiness of times when we may think what we please, and express what we think." The cloud of apprehension, indeed, is not quite lifted. Nerva was an old invalid, Trajan was a warrior, and the chances of war might deprive Rome of his services. "And yet," continues the biographer

of the brave and moderate Agricola, "though, at the dawn of a most happy age, Nerva Cæsar blended things once irreconcilable—sovereignty and freedom—though Nerva Trajan is now daily augmenting the prosperity of the time; and though the public safety has not only our hopes and good wishes, but has also the certain pledge of their fulfilment, still, from the necessary condition of human frailty, the remedy works less quickly than the disease." The profound melancholy of these words will be obvious to every reader. He had lived to witness a senate honoured; the prætorians and the legions kept under restraint; the informers (*delatores*) banished or silenced; the people, if not content, controlled by an effective police; the provinces equitably ruled; the Cæsar, in semblance at least, only the first citizen; thoughts no longer manacled; books no longer burnt in the forum, or used as evidence of treason against their authors. Yet he could not hide from himself the precarious tenure of these blessings. The happy age that had dawned rested on a foundation of sand. Among the senators might lie hid, in case of another revolution—and Tacitus had witnessed the untimely ends of four Cæsars—another voluptuous Nero, another timid and sanguinary Domitian. The freedom which depends on the character of the reigning sovereign is ever uncertain. Even Caligula and Nero for a while ruled well. The conduct of Trajan made vain the apprehensions of Tacitus. But the experience of his earlier days affected all his later ones, and he never quite reconciled himself to a Cæsar in the place of elective consuls, or to a privy council in that of a senate.

In the second year of Trajan's principate, Tacitus was one of the consuls. The office indeed was only the shadow of a once mighty name, and the duties of it were merely nominal. Yet it was still an honourable distinction and a permanent advance in social rank. The only recorded act of Tacitus in his consulship was his delivery of the funeral oration over the body of Virginius Rufus, one of "the noblest Romans of them all" in that degenerate age. "Ever benign to this octogenarian hero,"—who, besides the usual perils of his calling, had thrice escaped from the fury of mutinous legionaries, — "Fortune," says Pliny, "reserved her last favour to him, that of being commemorated by the greatest of living orators."

In 99 A.D., Tacitus, now proconsul, was joined with Pliny, then consul-elect, in managing the impeachment of Marius Priscus for high crimes and misdemeanours committed by him while governor of the province of Africa. In spite of powerful advocacy and interest, the culprit was condemned. The prosecutors—the injured Africans—gained their suit, but apparently little else; for Marius, after paying heavy law expenses, and doubtless also as heavy bribes to some of the jury, lived very comfortably in exile upon the residue of his ill-got gains. He was infamous enough to be specially mentioned by the contemporary satirist:—

——"By a juggling sentence doomed in vain
(For who, that holds the plunder, heeds the pain?)
Marius to wine devotes his morning hours,
And laughs in exile at the offended powers;

> While, sighing o'er the victory she has won,
> The province finds herself the more undone."
> —Juvenal, Sat. I. [Gifford.]

Pliny, in his description of the trial, says that Tacitus answered Salvius Liberalis, the counsel for the defendant, "most eloquently, and with that dignity which belongs in a remarkable degree to his oratory." The two illustrious pleaders received a vote of thanks from the senate for their exertions in the cause. From this moment Tacitus departs from sight. There is indeed a slight trace of him in one of Pliny's letters, from which it appears that he was not at the time resident in Rome, nor very well supplied with news from it. And as we are unable to do more than surmise the date of his birth, so we must leave to conjecture that of his death. He lived long enough to complete, with one exception, the works he projected. He is the chronicler of the Cæsars from the death of Augustus to the accession of Nerva. "I have reserved," he tells us, "as an employment for my old age, should my life be long enough, a subject at once more fruitful and less anxious in the reign of the divine Nerva and the empire of Trajan." He may have rested from his labours before he began this work; or he may never have seriously meant to write it. Even of good Cæsars it might not always be prudent to speak the truth, and Tacitus may have thought himself living too near the time of his proposed narrative to write with impartiality about even a Trajan.

In the failure of materials for his life, we may endeavour to learn something of Tacitus from himself. If it be true that every great portrait-painter intro-

duces upon his canvas something of his own nature, it is also true that every great historical writer infuses into his narrative something of his own feelings. It cannot escape any attentive reader of the 'Annals,' in which the writer's proclivities are far more patent than in the 'History,' that he was an aristocrat, in the sense that the proud Appian, Fabian, and Claudian houses were of old. Although firmly convinced that the vast body of the empire could not be effectively governed by one hand alone, he accepted a Cæsar as a necessity of the time. But to be resigned to a system of rule is one thing; to regard it with an eye of favour is another. Many who loved Cromwell little, served him well. It was no small recommendation of Trajan to Tacitus that, departing from the solemn injunction of Augustus not to extend the borders of the empire, he added to it provinces north of the Theiss and east of the Euphrates. At last there was a Cæsar treading in the steps of the Scipios and Paulus Æmilius. And yet, notwithstanding his military virtues and the temperate character of his civil administration, it was not Trajan, but the consuls and senate of the past who had the historian's real allegiance. His contempt for the nobles among whom he sat in the great council-chamber at Rome only increased his admiration for the Conscript Fathers whom the Epirot envoy likened to a conclave of gods; and who bated not a "jot of hope or heart" when Pyrrhus was within a few miles of Rome or Hannibal at her gates. The mongrel populace of the capital, with its greed for bread and the games, he contrasted with the people that once supplied the pith of the legions, and who, although often turbulent and factious, were proud of

their nobles and jealous of the honour of the Commonwealth. The Gracchi he viewed with dislike, since it was owing to their measures that the way was prepared for Caius Marius and the first Cæsar. The brother tribunes were the beginners of that evil end which Tacitus so deplored. By them and their mischievous laws the free Republic was turned into an absolute and irresponsible despotism, and the weal of millions intrusted to the discretion of one man. The reputation of Tacitus appears in his own time to have rested entirely on his powers as an orator. A few intimate friends indeed were forming high expectations of the history he had in hand; and Pliny, we know, supplied some materials for a work which he correctly judged would be immortal, but which he less correctly anticipated would be immediately popular. It is strange that of an orator so renowned as he seems to have been not a line of his speeches remains, although there exist fragments of those of the Gracchi and Cato and Marius. Of the character of Tacitus's oratory we have only one hint. "Dignity" was its most remarkable feature; and "dignity" seems to have struck Sidonius Apollinaris as the leading characteristic of the historian, since, when giving a list of the most eminent Roman authors in prose or verse, he mentions the stately march (*pompa*) of the style of Tacitus—"a name," he adds, "never to be uttered without a tribute of applause." The speeches assigned by the historian to some of the persons in his narratives may have been cast in the mould of his own eloquence; and if so, then we may easily understand why "dignity" is ascribed to his public pleadings.

If we infer the disposition of Tacitus from the report of his oratory, or the study of his works, we shall regard him as a grave and sarcastic personage; and yet the inference might be wrong. The admiration, the affection of Pliny for his friend, the deep feeling with which Tacitus narrates the life and death of Agricola, the evident pleasure exhibited by him when delineating characters eminent for virtue, forbid us to imagine him austere or morose. But there are people, amiable and calm in disposition, who, when they take a pen into their hand, display a stern and acrid temper, more especially if they have a grievance or a theory to expound. Lack of preferment cannot have been among the causes for the gravity or despondency of Tacitus, for he had held the highest office of the State next to "great Cæsar's," and bore ever after the rank and title of a Consular.

There are men who live in the past—not merely students whose world is their library, but such as have taken a share in the business of the present time, and, nevertheless, yearn for days that cannot return. Was Tacitus of this class of men? More than once in his 'Annals' he appears to have been so. The chronicler of Tiberius, he says, has fallen on an evil time. "I am aware"—glancing, perhaps, at the more fortunate Livy, who could be a *Pompeian* without giving offence to Augustus—"that most of the transactions which I have related, or shall hereafter relate, may perhaps appear unimportant, and too trivial to be recorded. But none must compare these my Annals with the writings of those who compiled the history of the ancient Roman people. *They* had for their subjects mighty wars, cities sacked, kings routed and taken

captive; or if they turned from these to treat of domestic affairs, they had before them an unlimited field for digression in the dissensions between the consuls and the tribunes, the agrarian laws, the corn-laws, and the contests between the commons and the patricians. The matter on which I am occupied is circumscribed and unproductive of renown to the author—a state of undisturbed peace, or only interrupted in a limited degree, the sad condition of affairs in the city, and a prince indifferent about extending the bounds of the empire." * He sighed for the brave days when some province almost yearly was annexed to the commonwealth. The manly virtues of a past age blinded him to its faults, and in his aversion to a single rule he forgot the vices of a divided one.

The names of some of his friends have been preserved—that of Justus Fabius, to whom he addressed the 'Dialogue on the Orators,' and that of Asinius Rufus, both friends also of Pliny. From Pliny we derive the best part of our slight knowledge of the historian, to whom he addresses eleven of his letters. Between him and Tacitus the strictest intimacy existed. Each of them submitted his writings to the other's inspection, and Pliny is never weary of applauding the harmony, frankness, and good faith which pervaded their intercourse from first to last. Pliny ever prophesied great things of the historical works on which Tacitus was engaged, and furnished him with materials, as, for example, two letters on the eruption of Vesuvius. Of the two we know not which was the survivor, but we are able to say that no cloud ever dimmed the brightness of their friendship.

* Annals, iv. 32.

So well known, indeed, was their affection for each other, that they were jointly remembered in people's wills, and for equal legacies, unless the testator chanced to be especially a friend to either. Pliny, indeed, intimates (Epist. vii. 20) that "there lacked not those who were preferred to one or both of them," but, as for himself, he uniformly assigned the precedence in all things to his beloved friend.

CHAPTER II.

'AGRICOLA.'

THIS book is intended to perpetuate the memory of its author's father-in-law, of whom it is justly said that "one would easily believe him a good man, and willingly believe him a great one." "To bequeath," writes Tacitus, at the opening of it, "to posterity a record of the deeds and characters of distinguished men is an ancient practice, which even the present age, careless as it is of its own sons, has not abandoned whenever some great and conspicuous excellence has conquered and risen superior to that failing common alike to petty and great states, blindness and hostility to goodness. But in days gone by, as there was a greater inclination and a more open path to the achievement of memorable actions, so the man of highest genius was led by the simple reward of a good conscience to hand on without partiality or self-seeking the remembrance of greatness." In very early times, when perhaps writing was not a common accomplishment,—for consuls who handled well the spade can hardly have been very adroit with the pen—biographies took mostly the form of funeral orations, and of their partiality or inaccuracy Livy complains. So far from supplying the historian with

trustworthy materials, they misled and perplexed him in his researches. Whether, as manners became more corrupt, biographers grew more veracious, cannot be told.

Cnæus Julius Agricola was born at the ancient and famous colony of *Forum Julii*—the modern 'Frejus.' Each of his grandfathers was an imperial procurator —that is, of the highest equestrian rank. His father, Julius Græcinus, was of even higher station, since he was a member of the senatorian order. Græcinus was a distinguished orator and philosopher, but these good gifts excited the envy of Caius Cæsar, who took the first convenient opportunity of getting rid of him. His mother, Julia Procilla, was a matron of the old Roman stamp. Under her wise and watchful guardianship, Agricola imbibed in early youth the virtues which he practised in mature years. In a period notorious for extravagance and excess of every description — vices that extended even to learning and philosophy — Julia kept always in view the wholesome doctrine of "a golden mean." While pursuing his studies at Massilia (Marseilles), —one of the great universities of the empire—he manifested a keen relish for merely speculative subjects — more, indeed, than his mother approved. She destined the apt pupil for practical life. She looked forward to his serving his country in the senate and the field. She knew, perhaps too well, that the philosophers of the time were often idle dreamers, and sometimes arrant knaves. From each of the four great schools he might derive some wholesome rules for the conduct of life, but no one of them would fit him for commanding a legion, or for becoming a great

advocate, or a great lawyer. This philosophical tendency—the only excess ascribed to Agricola—"was soon corrected by reason and experience, and he retained from his learning that most difficult of lessons —moderation."

An untimely end was in store for this exemplary matron. After Nero's death, the empire was torn in pieces by civil wars. The fleet of Otho, one of the three competitors for the purple, "while cruising idly about, cruelly ravaged Vintimiglia (*Intemelii*), a district of Liguria, and Julia, who was living there on her own estate, was murdered, and the estate itself and a large portion of her patrimony were plundered."

Britain was to Rome in those days very nearly what Algeria is now to France,—a school of war, and a nursery of recruits. It was there that Agricola served his military apprenticeship. His first commander was Suetonius Paulinus, a diligent and judicious officer, who, probably discerning in the young man great capability for his profession, made choice of him to share his tent. This mode of initiation for an officer bears some resemblance to the practice of the feudal times, when the sons of good families were trained for warlike or civil duties at the court of the king or in the castle of some powerful baron. "Agricola," we are told by his biographer, "without the recklessness with which young men often make the profession of arms a mere pastime, and without indolence, never availed himself of his tribune's rank, or his own inexperience, to procure enjoyment or to escape from duty. He sought to make himself acquainted with the province and known to the army; he would learn from the skilful, and keep

pace with the bravest; would attempt nothing for display, would avoid nothing from fear, and would be at once careful and vigilant."

When Agricola was in the tent or on the staff of Paulinus, there was much to do and much to learn in Britain. The victories that had been won in the island by the generals of Claudius had been rendered nearly ineffectual by the subsequent rebellion of the British people. "Never," says Tacitus, "was the island in a more disturbed or critical condition." "Veteran soldiers had been massacred, colonial towns burnt, vast districts of the open country ravaged, and armies cut off." It was a sound though a severe school for a young officer, and he learnt in it "skill, experience, and a desire to rise in his profession (*ambitio*)."

Nearly every Roman was expected to combine a civil with a military career. From Britain Agricola went to Rome, to go through the ordinary routine of office. He was appointed quæstor, and the ballot assigned to him Asia for his province and Salvius Titianus for his proconsul. The young officials of Rome seldom returned from an Eastern province the better, except in pocket, for their sojourn in it. The morals of Roman Asia were even worse than the morals of the capital. The province itself was wealthy, and the inhabitants of it were regarded as fair prey for old or young gentlemen whose creditors were troublesome. Agricola, however, according to his biographer, did nothing to be ashamed of in his quæstorship.

He married, at Rome, Domitia Decidiana, a lady of illustrious birth. Their union was a very happy one. They had two children—a son, who died in

his infancy, and a daughter, who was married to Tacitus.

His prætorship, also, was nearly a sinecure. He exhibited, as his office bound him to do, some Games; and in all matters of ceremony he kept up the dignity of a first-class public magistrate, erring neither on the side of profusion nor on that of parsimony. By such comparative insignificance he may have escaped unpleasant collision with the Cæsar or his favourites. For in Nero's reign, more especially in the later years of it, to keep out of that tyrant's sight as much as possible was the wisest course that high officials, civil or military, could follow. Nero's immediate successor, Servius Galba, must have had a good opinion of Agricola's probity, since he appointed him one of the commissioners for inspecting the accounts of the offerings and deposits at various temples in Rome or the provinces. All that Nero had appropriated had been dissipated beyond recovery; and it was one of the deepest offences given by the unfortunate Galba that he tried to compel the ministers and freedmen of Nero to refund his bounties. In other respects the commissioners reported favourably on the condition of ecclesiastical property, and so were able to exonerate the conscience of the State from the burden of sacrilege. Tacitus commends the "searching scrutiny" of Agricola; yet since, in so delicate an investigation, it might not have been difficult to "cook the accounts," his colleagues must surely have been as honest as himself.

He was hurrying from Rome to pay the last honours to his mother, when a messenger overtook him with the tidings that Vespasian was a candidate for the throne.

He at once joined the Flavian party. The deeds of Vespasian in Britain alone were well known to one who had served in that island himself, and the new Cæsar's renown had recently been increased by his conduct in the Jewish wars. The emperor had not yet quitted the east, or at least had come no nearer Rome than Alexandria. He at once despatched Agricola to recruit the legions in Britain. The twentieth legion had reluctantly taken the oath of allegiance to Vespasian; and the tribune whom Agricola succeeded in the command, had fostered in the soldiers a spirit of insubordination. Accordingly, it can have been no easy task, and it may have been a perilous one, to restore discipline. During that chaotic period of civil wars the legionaries had frequently risen against their generals; had sometimes murdered, had often expelled them, not unwounded, from the camp; and had freely shed the blood of the centurions and other officers. Once more Agricola's discretion and even temper prevailed, and the Twentieth appears to have been reconciled to the new dynasty.

Vespasian knew how to appreciate a good officer, and Agricola's promotion rapidly followed. Returning from Britain in 73 A.D., he was appointed to the important province of Aquitania and raised to the rank of a patrician. His provincial government lasted three years; and in 77 he was recalled to Rome, where he was invested with the consular robes and adopted into the college of augurs—an honourable and not quite an empty distinction, since it empowered the commander of an army to take the auspices whenever it might be advisable to soothe the fears, to repress the zeal, or stimulate the valour, of the legion-

aries. Britain, the scene of his past services and of his future fame, was assigned to him as his province.

The new proconsul found, on his arrival in his province about the midsummer of 78, much work to be done, and also much to be undone. The soldiers were demoralised, the Britons were biding their time, and the Roman officers generally were flattering themselves that the subjugation of the islanders was complete. So far was it from being so, that some tribes were actually under arms, and others preparing to try once again the fortune of war. A serious loss had been sustained by the Romans shortly before Agricola's arrival. The Ordovices, seated between Cardigan Bay and the river Dee, had cut to pieces a squadron of cavalry quartered in their territory, and it was difficult at the instant to get a fresh supply of horses; for the small breed, or rather the ponies, of Britain, were not suited for cavalry. The hopes of the Britons had revived by their success. They anxiously watched the temper of their new governor. Would he be a corrupt and slothful, or an able and strenuous administrator?—for they had experienced both kinds. Should they hasten or defer their long-intended revolt, then simmering over nearly all the island from the Humber to the straits of Dover?

The summer of 78 was verging on autumn before Agricola was ready to open the campaign. Nor at first did he meet with very zealous support. The soldiers of many divisions had promised themselves the pleasure of inaction and free quarters for that year at least, while many of the officers urged him to be content for the present with watching the movements of the British chieftains. But Agricola resolved to face the

open or secret peril immediately. His first act was nearly to exterminate the Ordovices. Yet prompt and sharp as this retaliation was, it was a two-edged weapon. It might intimidate or it might more deeply incense the Britons. The victory must be followed up. The next blow was stricken in the same quarter, and the little island of Mona (Anglesey), which Suetonius Paulinus had taken, but had been compelled by a rising of the eastern tribes to abandon, was again annexed to Roman Britain. This time, the natives made but a feeble defence of the sacred island, although the assailants laboured under the grave disadvantage of being without a fleet. "The skill and resolution of the general accomplished the passage. With some picked men of the auxiliaries, disencumbered of all baggage, who knew the shallows and had that national experience in swimming which enables the Britons to take care not only of themselves, but of their arms and horses, he delivered so unexpected an attack, that the astonished enemy, who were looking for a fleet, and an assault by sea, could not imagine anything would be formidable or invincible to such assailants."

Let the reader observe that Agricola's success was mainly owing to the skill of *British* auxiliaries in "swimming." It is an undesigned evidence that the tribes of Britain were employed by Roman generals against their own countrymen, just as native regiments in our Indian wars are employed as auxiliaries. The recovery of Mona immediately increased the fame and stamped the character of Agricola as an energetic soldier. Other proconsuls, if we may accept the statement of a panegyrist, had idled their time away "in vain display" and a round of ceremonies, whereas he

"chose rather toil and danger," and kept in the field at a period—the autumnal equinox—when it was the usual practice of commanders to withdraw into winter quarters.

In the next summer, 79 A.D., Agricola advanced northward into the territory of the Brigantes, and undertook the organisation of the district, lately reduced, between the Humber and the Tyne. To protect these new subjects of the empire from the incursions of the barbarians who roamed the Cheviots and the Pentland hills, he drew a chain of forts from sea to sea. In 80 he moved further northward, still consolidating his acquired land; and in 81 he pushed along the eastern coast as far as the Firth of Forth, building forts and making roads at every step of his progress. All the country south of the Forth was now occupied by Roman garrisons, and "the enemy were pushed into what might be called another island." For a moment the empire seemed to have found its northern limit. The fifth year of his proconsulship was engaged in strengthening his position between the two isthmuses, and in reducing the western side of the new domain. From the Mull of Galloway he discovered an island hitherto unknown to Roman navigators. "The grassy plains of teeming Hibernia," says Dean Merivale, "offered a fairer prey than the grey mountains which frowned upon his fresh intrenchments, and all their wealth, he was assured, might be secured by the valour of a single legion. But other counsels prevailed, and Ireland, so the fates ordained, was left to her fogs and feuds for eleven more centuries."

But while Agricola was engaged in consolidating his northern province, and securing it by walls and forts

against inroads, the Caledonians, mistaking his two years' inaction for exhaustion or fear, resumed their courage. He returned, therefore, to offensive measures. Understanding them to be preparing to make a combined attack on his lines, he anticipated them by a rapid incursion into the regions beyond the Forth. The land was for the most part a barren waste; the enemy was numerous and able to cut off even the scantiest supply of food, and the army must therefore be furnished with a commissariat. This could be supplied by a naval armament alone. Such an armament accordingly was fitted out, and moved parallel to his flank as he marched along the coast of Fife. Prisoners reported that the Britons were astounded at the sight of the fleet, and saw that if their bays, creeks, and the mouths of their rivers were open to invasion no refuge would remain for themselves. Surprised they may have been by this novel aspect of war, but they were not disheartened, nor was their strategy that of ignorant barbarians. They would not meet the advancing legions, but got between them and the forts in their rear, so that in case of a defeat the retreat of the Romans would be cut off. On learning that the Caledonian attack would be made with more than one army, and taking into account their superior numbers and knowledge of the ground, Agricola distributed his forces in three divisions, and so advanced to the encounter. With the exception of a heavy loss sustained by the ninth legion from a sudden assault in the night, the defeat of the Britons was a signal one, and "had not the flying enemy been sheltered by morasses and forests, this victory would have ended the war."

We are now on the verge of the most animated and

interesting portion of this biography. Hitherto, so far as Agricola is concerned, we have read the names of tribes or clans only, and not till his seventh campaign, in 84 A.D. do we meet with an individual man worthy to stand beside Caractacus and Boadicea; at least we must suppose Tacitus to have believed in the personality of Galgacus, since he puts a speech, and to us a very instructive one, in his mouth. It is valuable on two accounts: on the one hand it gives a notion of Tacitus's own eloquence, pregnant with thought, condensed in phrase, sagacious in its views, epigrammatic in its periods; on the other, we may discern in the words ascribed to Galgacus some prevision of an approaching revolution in the fortunes of the historian's own countrymen. After referring to the sufferings already endured at Roman hands by every tribe of Britons, to the cruelty, rapacity, and lust of their oppressors, Galgacus proceeds to hint that there is a worm in the bud of the unwieldly empire.

"Do you suppose," he is made to say, "that the Romans will be as brave in war as they are licentious in peace? To our strifes and discords they owe their fame, and they turn the errors of an enemy to the renown of their own army—an army which, composed as it is of every variety of nations, is held together by success, and will be broken up by disaster. These Gauls and Germans, and, I blush to say, these numerous Britons, who, though they lend their lives to support a stranger's rule, have been its enemies longer than its subjects, you cannot imagine to be bound by fidelity and affection. Fear and terror there certainly are, feeble bonds of attachment: remove them, and those who have ceased to fear will begin to hate."

With the battle of the Grampians,* and the rout of Galgacus and the Caledonian army, Agricola's military career virtually closed, although he remained in his province a few months after this signal victory. If we may give implicit credence to one so nearly connected with him, Agricola may rank with Cicero, as an exception to the ordinary class of Roman provincial governors. Never relaxing in vigilance, and only once taken unawares by the enémy, he restored discipline in the camp, and explored the estuaries and forests on his route. "Many states, hitherto independent, gave hostages, and laid aside their animosities. Garrisons and forts were established among them with a skill and diligence with which no newly-acquired part of Britain had before been treated."

The civilising power of Rome furnishes the brightest chapter in her annals. It was by her institutions, far more than by her arms, that the nations of the empire melted away into the Roman name and people. "Wheresoever the Roman conquers he inhabits," is a very just observation of Seneca; and he might have added that wherever he inhabited, at least in the northern and western provinces, he disseminated the arts of peace and the boon of a refined and uniform language. It could not escape a sagacious and humane proconsul that territory acquired by war would be best maintained by introducing a taste and a demand for the luxuries of the conqueror, and not the luxuries only, but greater skill in agriculture and new systems for conducting public business. "In order," says

* The "Mons Grampius" is said now to be an error of transcription, the real name given by Tacitus being "Mons Graupius."

Tacitus, "to accustom to rest and repose through the charms of luxury a population scattered and barbarous and therefore inclined to war, Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice, and dwelling-houses, praising the energetic and reproving the indolent. Thus an honourable rivalry took the place of compulsion. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the industry of the Gauls, that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the 'toga' became fashionable. Step by step they were led to things which dispose to vice—the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this, in their ignorance, they called civilisation, when it was in fact but a part of their servitude."

He consulted alike for the good conduct of his army and the convenience of the Britons. He kept his household under restraint, a thing as hard to many as ruling a province. Neither freedmen nor slaves were allowed to assist in transacting public business—a virtue which his Roman readers could more thoroughly appreciate than his modern ones. Promotion he determined by merit alone; impartial himself, he listened not to the prayers or recommendation of his friends. As regarded the nations—"he lightened the exaction of corn and tribute by an equal distribution of the burden, while he got rid of those contrivances for gain which were more intolerable than the tribute itself."

Agricola was recalled in A.D. 84, having been in his province nearly eight years. Tacitus insinuates that

Domitian feared lest his victorious and popular lieutenant might prefer security in Britain to very possible danger at Rome. But whether the emperor were jealous of him or not, Agricola, a man of the old Roman stamp, "knew how to obey as well as to command." To soothe his mortification, if he felt any, at being ordered to resign, a freedman was sent to him with the tempting offer of the government of Syria. The messenger was charged not to deliver the letter if he found the proconsul ready to obey. Agricola never saw the imperial rescript; it was brought back unopened to the Cæsar — the ex-proconsul was already crossing the Channel on his way Rome-ward.

With his recall from Britain ended the public life of Agricola. He prudently avoided all display: he entered Rome after nightfall, so as to shun a reception by his friends or the populace: at night also he went to the palace, and after a hurried embrace from Domitian, who deigned not a word to his ex-viceroy, he mingled in the crowd of courtiers. Henceforward he studiously shunned publicity. Simple in dress, courteous in conversation, accompanied by two or three friends, he excited the surprise of a people accustomed and not unfavourable to ostentation. "Can this," they said, "be the hero of a hundred fights? Can this be the man who has really conquered those warlike islanders, whom the mighty Julius left to their original freedom, and whom Claudius and his captains imperfectly subdued?" "The many," says Tacitus, "who commonly judge of great men by their external grandeur, after having seen and attentively surveyed him, asked the secret of a greatness which but few could explain."

And yet not even his modesty and retirement exempted Agricola from danger. While in Britain, he had often been a mark for informers, though he was uniformly acquitted. So far at least Domitian deserves credit for turning a deaf ear alike to those who accused, or to those who insidiously extolled the absent proconsul; "for," Tacitus justly remarks, "the worst class of enemies" under a despotism "are the men who praise."

One more offer of preferment was made to Agricola. The year, the fifty-second of his age (90 A.D.), had arrived in which the proconsulate of Asia or Africa was to fall to him by lot. Perhaps his friends, certainly the voice of the people, called on him to accept this office, for both of them contrasted his vigour, firmness, and experience in war, with the inertness and timidity of other generals. His enemies, however, on this occasion were his better counsellors. Knowing Domitian's reluctance to employ him in any high office, they artfully contrived to lead Agricola himself to refuse it. They tendered their services in procuring acceptance for his excuse; and at last, throwing off all disguise, brought him by entreaties and threats to Domitian. The excuse was offered, was accepted, and the Cæsar thanked for his gracious condescension. However, notwithstanding his supposed envy and hatred of the man, Domitian "was softened by the moderation and prudence of Agricola"—and Tacitus closes this section of the Biography with one of the many pregnant observations that, well understood, throw such light on Cæsarian history, as well as afford a clue to his own opinions. "Let it be known," he says, "to those whose habit it

is to admire the disregard of authority" (the political Stoics of the time), "that there may be great men even under bad emperors, and that obedience and submission, when joined to activity and vigour, may attain a glory which most men reach only by a perilous career, utterly useless to the State, and closed by a death intended for effect." The gist of this sentiment often appears in both the 'History' and 'Annals.' "Good people," thought Tacitus, "are scarce enough in such evil times; why, by self-destruction, will they make the number even fewer?"

Agricola died in the fifty-sixth year of his age. There was a rumour of his having been poisoned. His son-in-law declines giving an opinion on the subject. Tacitus himself was far away from Rome at the moment. Yet there was a report of foul play—and a report was a temptation which the historian rarely resists. It looked very suspicious that "during the whole of Argicola's illness the emperor's chief freedmen and confidential physicians called more frequently than is usual with a court which pays its visits by means of messengers." Such departure from imperial routine had an ugly favour—and, to do the Roman people justice, it must be allowed that they were as credulous in believing rumours as the Parisian people are now, and have ever been. It is superfluous to canvass the truth or falsehood of a story for which the biographer himself will not vouch. The dying Agricola did not fail to remember Domitian in his last will and testament. He made him co-heir with his excellent wife and most dutiful daughter, and the emperor expressed his delight at so handsome a bequest. Perhaps the widow Domitia Decidiana and

her daughter fared not the worse for this parting compliment; and even Tacitus himself may have been indebted to it for protection from informers, and thus survived to paint the last Flavian Cæsar as a second—and even a worse—Nero. He winds up his account of Agricola's last moments with these words: "So blinded and perverted was Domitian's mind by incessant flattery, that he did not know it was only a bad emperor whom a good father would make his heir."

The concluding sections of the 'Life of Agricola' have in all times been regarded among the noblest samples of historical eloquence. After recounting Agricola's demeanour in his last hours, the tender care of his most loving and faithful Decidiana, and his own and his wife's grief at their absence from his dying bed, the biographer proceeds: "If there is any dwelling-place for the spirits of the just; if, as the wise believe, noble souls do not perish with the body, rest thou in peace; and call us, thy family, from weak regrets and womanish laments to the contemplation of thy virtues, for which we must not weep nor beat the breast. Let us honour thee not so much with transitory praises as with our reverence; and, if our powers permit us, with our emulation. That will be true respect, that the true affection of thy nearest kin. This, too, is what I would enjoin on the daughter and wife,—to honour the memory of such a father, such a husband, by pondering in their hearts all his words and acts, by cherishing the features and lineaments of his character rather than those of his person. It is not that I would forbid the likenesses which are wrought in marble or in bronze; but

as the faces of men, so all similitudes of the face are weak and perishable things, while the fashion of the soul is everlasting, such as may be expressed, not in some foreign substance, or by the help of art, but in our own lives. Whatever we loved, whatever we admired in Agricola, survives, and will survive in the hearts of men, in the succession of the ages, in the fame that waits on noble deeds. Over many, indeed, of those who have gone before, as over the inglorious and ignoble, the waves of oblivion will roll; Agricola, made known to posterity by history and tradition, will live for ever."

To English readers Agricola is naturally one of the most interesting persons in Roman annals, since he was the first to disclose to Cæsar and Europe the extent and value of the youngest of Roman provinces. He has commonly the credit of being the first circumnavigator of our island; but of late years this opinion has been considerably modified. The insular character of Britain had been asserted ever since the time of Cæsar; but Dion Cassius, an historian of the second century of our era, is the first to relate that Agricola's fleet, in the year 84 A.D., sailed completely round it. But it should be borne in mind that Dion flourished more than a century after the supposed circumnavigation took place, and at a time when the form and dimensions of Britain were well known, and its roads and principal harbours were laid down in the Itineraries. Unfortunately the text of Tacitus is corrupt just where we need it to be clear, and we cannot pronounce from his narrative whether he described Agricola's naval officers as having completed or merely forwarded the discovery. He tells us that after Agri-

cola's seventh campaign closed with the summer of 84 A.D., he directed the fleet, which had hitherto accompanied the movements of his army, to proceed northward, and, besides striking terror in the still unconquered Caledonian tribes, to collect for him such information as he needed for his next movements in the summer of the ensuing year. Now it is important to bear in mind that the fleet began its voyage northwards at the beginning of autumn, and also that Roman mariners rarely, except under strong pressure, put out far to sea, but usually hugged the coast from headland to headland. Moreover, an expedition beginning after the short summer in that high latitude was past, would encounter the equinoctial gales near at hand. We have no reason to suppose that Agricola's ships did not return in good condition to their winter-harbour in the Forth: accordingly their exploring errand can hardly have occupied more than a few weeks, a period much too brief to allow not very bold or skilful sailors to circumnavigate so large an island, to say nothing of October tides, the fogs of the Irish Channel, and the fact that there were no charts to guide them, and possibly also no experienced or trustworthy pilots to be found. The opinion of Dean Merivale on this subject is favourable to a certain amount of new discovery, but adverse to a complete one. "The Roman mariners," he says, "now for the first time entered the Pentland Firth, surveyed and counted the Orkney Islands, and gained perhaps a glimpse of the Shetlands. They ascertained the point at which Britain terminates northward, and possibly noted the great deflection of the coast southward from Cape Wrath. Having effected the object

of the expedition,"—that of informing their commander-in-chief how far his next summer's advance might extend,—"they returned, as I cannot doubt, still creeping timidly, as was their wont, from headland to headland, and having hugged the eastern coast from Caithness to the Firth of Forth, were finally drawn up for the winter on the beach from which they had been launched at the commencement of the season." . . . "The demonstration thus obtained was itself regarded as a triumphal achievement, and Agricola was celebrated by his countrymen as an explorer as well as a conqueror." *

The appellation of "conqueror" is justly due to Agricola for his achievements north of the Humber, where he reduced to at least a temporary submission the present districts of Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland, and for his success in the hitherto untrodden ground of Caledonia. Still greater praise than that accorded him for his victories in the field, belongs to him for the care he took to secure and consolidate his acquisitions. With the patience and precaution of a Wellington, he never made an advance without previously providing for the safety of his army in flank and rear, and he employed for that end the constant Roman method of laying down roads and building a chain of forts linked to one another by walls of earth capped and faced with stone or solid brick-work. "Struck perhaps with the natural defences of the line from the Tyne to the Solway, where the island seems to have been broken, as it were, in the middle, he drew a chain of forts from sea to sea to protect the reclaimed subjects of the southern valleys from the untamed

* History of the Romans, vii. 89.

barbarians who roamed the Cheviots and the Pentlands."*

The Roman generals who preceded Agricola are briefly enumerated by Tacitus. In south Britain the progress of the invader was slow, and checked by many serious reverses, but it was sure. Aulus Plautius was the first governor of consular rank, and he was most effectively seconded by Flavius Vespasian, then "first shown to the fates." In our island he learned or practised the art of war, which he so brilliantly employed afterwards against an infuriate and despairing foe in Palestine, and which, combined with his civil merits, finally elevated him to the purple. Plautius defeated the Trinobantes, under their leaders, Caractacus and Togodumnus, the sons of Cunobelin, one of the most powerful of the British kings. His capital was Camulodunum—Colchester. Plautius, however, appears to have penetrated from the eastern counties to Gloucestershire; and his lieutenant, Vespasian, "crossing the banks of a broad river," [the Severn?] to have led his detachment over the Welsh border. Our readers would probably owe us small thanks were we to trace the march of the legions over uncertain ground. The success of his proconsul was sufficient to induce the not very youthful and unwieldy Claudius to cross the channel and to take part in the war. From the movements of his general we might expect that the Cæsar would proceed at once from his landing-place in Kent to Gloucestershire. On the contrary, he went into Essex, and routed the Trinobantes, in the camp which they had drawn

* Merivale, vii. 1.

around Camulodunum—so bewildering is our information on the Roman campaigns in Britain.

On his return to Rome, Claudius celebrated a triumph which he had fairly earned, for his conquests were really solid and extensive; and had not his lieutenants relaxed in their vigilance, or had they been better acquainted with the character of the natives, a considerable portion of Britain south of the Humber would have quietly submitted to the yoke of the Romans. But the victors had still a lesson to learn. The easier portion of their task was to encounter the enemy in the field: to follow him into the forests and morasses, to detect and suppress promptly his cabals, and break up his confederacies, were labours yet to be undergone, and disaster far more than success was to be the instructor of a series of proconsuls.

In the year 47 A.D., Plautius was succeeded by Ostorius Scapula, who signalised his command by founding the colony of Camulodunum, and receiving, from a traitor's hand indeed, the surrender of Caractacus. The next distinguished proconsul was Suetonius Paulinus, whose name is inseparably connected with his defeat of the Britons in Anglesey (Mona), his suppression of the revolted Iceni, and the romantic story of Boadicea. "But for him," Tacitus says, "Britain would have been lost." The fury of the Iceni was especially directed against the colony at Camulodunum. It was a monument of their humiliation: so long as it stood, freedom was hopeless—the ground on which it was built had been wrenched from them—it was the abode of those whom they hated even more than the legionaries, the collectors of tribute; and in it

towered the great temple of Claudius, a perpetual insult to the deities of the land. The city, betrayed by the Trinobantes, was assailed by the Iceni. The garrison was feeble: the fortifications were hastily run up at the last moment: the troops which might have defended it were in remote quarters; and on the second day of the siege the stronghold was stormed, and all who had sought refuge in it, armed or unarmed, were slaughtered.

This was the last signal calamity that befell the Romans in Britain, and it was speedily avenged. Suetonius, in spite of his great services, was recalled. He appears to have been better suited for the rough work of war than for the delicate office of soothing the conquered, and reconciling them to their new masters. Under his successor, Petronius Turpilianus, victors and vanquished enjoyed without abusing them two years of peace, and Roman civilisation began to exercise its influence on Britain.

Under the successors of Agricola, the southern Britons generally acquiesced in the dominion of Rome, and the northern were awed by her prowess, or won by her arts. Commerce tended to efface the ravages of war. The products of the island, consisting chiefly of raw materials, found a ready market in the cities of Gaul; the youth of Britain were drafted into the legions and dispersed over the wide circumference of the empire in the camps of Egypt, Africa, and Syria, while at the same time natives of other lineage, and speaking strange languages, were imported into an island which a century earlier had been described as a new and scarcely habitable world.

"A hope is expressed," says Gibbon, "by Pompo-

nius Mela, a geographer who wrote under Claudius, that by the success of Roman arms the island (Britain) and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London." Perhaps what has least changed in the island since Tacitus commemorated the deeds of his father-in-law is the weather. "Severity of cold," he remarks, "is unknown, but their sky is obscured by continual rain and cloud." The historian's opinion, however unpalatable to ourselves, is still an article of faith in many European lands; and indeed we need not go further than Paris to be told that the sky which obscured the camp of Agricola still hangs over our shires and cities.

CHAPTER III.

THE 'GERMANY.'

A PASSAGE in this treatise on the manners and social condition of the Germans, affords a clue to the date of its composition. "Rome," says Tacitus, "was in her 640th year, when we first heard of the Cimbrian invader in the consulship of Cæcilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo, from which time to the second consulship of the Emperor Trajan, we find to be an interval of about 210 years." Consequently it was under its author's hand at least in the year 98 A.D.

And here our positive information about the 'Germany' ends. It has been pronounced to be a geographical and ethnological essay; a chapter, or a draft of one, intended for insertion in some historical narrative, or a satire on Roman morals as well as a record of German manners. If the 'History' had come down to us unmutilated, the problem might very likely have been solved. Tacitus delighted in episodes on the character of foreign nations. We have a fragment of one in his account of the Jews; had he composed his projected life of Trajan there would possibly have been a special account of the Parthians; and we may owe this treatise on the Germans to the interest awakened in him when

a young man by the revolt of some Teutonic races in the wars that followed Nero's death in 68 A.D.

For supposing a satirical element in the 'Germany' there is plausible ground. His praise of the German wife is a scarcely concealed reproach of the Roman matron of his time. The Germans, he tells us, made no wills; the legacy-hunters of Rome were as notorious as the informers. The Roman nobles were often deeply in debt, and money-lenders were many and troublesome; whereas the virtuous Germans, at least of the interior—for those on the eastern Rhine-bank were beginning to be civilised and corrupted — cared little for gold or silver; and, indeed, were such outer-barbarians that their chieftains held the silver cups and salvers which prætors or proconsuls had given them as cheap as those of clay! Again, they were not at all, in respect of funerals, "noble animals, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave."* They did not heap garments or spices on the funeral pyre; they simply observed the custom of burning the bodies of illustrious men with certain kinds of wood. A turf mound formed their tombs; monuments, with their lofty and elaborate splendour, they rejected as oppressive to the dead. Whereas Pliny the elder says that the amount of spices consumed at Poppæa's (the wife of Nero) funeral exceeded a whole year's produce of Arabia—an exaggeration, probably, yet not an insignificant one. More instances of the contrasts between Roman and Teutonic manners might be culled from the 'Germany.' In fact, when two extremes of civilisation

* Sir T. Browne's 'Urn Burial.'

are brought into immediate contact with each other, it is difficult to avoid a semblance of satire.

Leaving now the question of the drift of Tacitus in writing his 'Germany,' we proceed to examine its contents. He closes the 27th section of it with these words: "Such, on the whole, is the account which I have received of the origin and manners of the entire German people." Evidently he had consulted either eyewitnesses of the "people," or writers on the subject, and one very voluminous author may possibly have been among his instructors. So intimate a friend of the younger Pliny can hardly have been quite unacquainted with the elder. Now Pliny the natural historian, at the age of twenty-three, served in Germany. He wrote also a history of the Germanic wars in twenty books, and, as was his laudable fashion, collected his materials for them when he was on the spot, for his nephew tells us that he commenced his work before returning from Belgium to Rome. Curious as he was on ethnological matters, he can hardly have spoken of Germanic wars without some mention of the Germanic races. But whether Tacitus were indebted to Pliny or not, the second part of this treatise is more perplexing than useful to ethnologists, although it has long been a field for much controversy about German names, places, and pedigrees. For such inquiries, indeed, with a few exceptions, the ancients were very poorly equipped. Both Greeks and Romans looked down with contempt on all languages except their own, and thus deprived themselves of one of the most valuable pass-keys to a history of nations.

The Germany described by Tacitus is bounded on the west and south by the Rhine and the Danube;

on the east by the Dacians and Sarmatians; and on the north and north-west by the ocean. But this area is far too large if we admit into it pure German races alone. In the time of Domitian or Trajan but little was known of the population near the Elbe, still less of that between that river and the Vistula. Roman generals, indeed, had penetrated the country as far as the left bank of the Elbe; but they speedily withdrew from it, and had little leisure, whether advancing or retreating, to make themselves familiar with the inhabitants, their manners or modes of life. Such knowledge as they picked up consisted of reports given by spies or deserters, by guides who very likely purposely misinformed them—for ignorance in a Roman was security for the German — or by such adventurous hawkers and pedlars as brought to these savage or semi-savage regions the luxuries of more civilised lands. There is reason for believing Tacitus to have confounded Sclavonian with German tribes. Almost the entire region east of the Elbe was inhabited by the former people alone—some centuries later it certainly was so; and there is neither record nor tradition of the Sclaves having expelled the Teutons between the first and ninth centuries of the Christian era.

Ancient historians, when they met with a people whose origin they could not trace, and whose manners and institutions puzzled them, generally put them down as sons of the soil—*aborigines:* and Tacitus is not an exception to this easy mode of meeting a difficulty. Of the Germans he writes: "I regard them as aboriginal, and not mixed at all with other races through immigration or intercourse." Having in mind probably the maritime Greeks and the Phœnicians, he proceeds: "In

former times, it was not by land but on shipboard that those who sought to emigrate would arrive; and, beside the perils of rough and unknown seas, who would leave Asia or Africa or Italy for Germany, with its wild country, its inclement skies, its sullen manners and aspect, unless it were his home?" He is nearer the truth in saying that the name Germany is modern and newly introduced. It was introduced, however, by foreigners, but not accepted by the Germans. No common collective term was used by them.

The same physical peculiarities throughout the vast population of Germany confirm him in his persuasion, that "the tribes of Germany are free from all taint of intermarriage with foreign nations — a distinct, unmixed race like none but themselves." Their common characteristics are these: "All have fierce blue eyes, red hair, huge frames, fit only for a sudden exertion. They are less able to bear laborious work. Heat and thirst they cannot in the least endure; to cold and hunger their climate and their soil inure them."

The debilitation of the German soldiers by heat is more than once mentioned by Roman historians. To his statement that the eyes of the Germans were grey or blue and fierce in expression, and that, compared with Italians, they were "more than common tall," there is nothing to object; but we protest against his assertion that their hair was universally red. Had he been more polite or zealous for truth, he would have limited redness and its usual accompaniment freckles to the male sex alone. The Latin poets are far more civil, and doubtless more just, than the historian on this important point. The yellow hair and blue eyes of their German female captives excited the admiration of the

young men of Rome, and the envy of both old and young women. Some of our English readers may be surprised, and perhaps will be glad to be told that the auburn tresses of the Germans fetched a high price in the Roman market; and that the locks which belonged by birth to the wife or daughter of a Teutonic warrior or herdsman, often belonged by purchase to some dark-haired Cynthia, or Lesbia, or Clodia. Again—and surely they knew better than Tacitus could—the old German poets adorned the most beautiful of their heroines with flowing yellow tresses. So omnipotent, indeed, in Domitian's time was the fashion, that ladies who could not afford to buy a Teutonic wig dyed their natural hair auburn or yellow.

But although the Roman ladies imported the ornaments of their German sisters, they were not, it seems, equally zealous in copying their housewifely virtues. Their marriage code was strict; so, indeed, had that of Rome once been. Divorce among the Germans was very rare: and when a sentence of it was inflicted, the punishment was little inferior, if at all, to that of death. There was no occasion to call in the aid of the civil magistrate. The husband was sole judge of his wrong. The culprit was expelled from his house in the presence of her kinsfolk, her hair was shorn, her garments were torn from her back, and she was flogged through the whole village. And the divorce was once and for ever: her crime met with no indulgence: the Germans had not arrived at the age of sentimentality; "neither beauty, age, nor wealth would procure the repudiated wife a second husband." In some states the marriage law or usage was even more stern, and Tacitus considers these states the happiest. In them maidens only were given in

marriage, and however young they might become widows, they remained widows for life. This was indeed a severe and not very intelligible restraint among a people who were always fighting either with wild beasts or with men nearly as savage. A defeat or a victory, a herd of buffaloes or of wolves, might easily decimate the population of a village, and the number of widows be more than that of wives. However, it was not the men only who were exposed to the chances of war. Women were commonly spectators of their husbands' prowess, and "tradition says that armies already wavering and giving way, have been rallied by women, who, with earnest entreaties and loud shrieks, and bared bosoms, vividly represented the horrors of captivity, which the Germans fear with such extreme dread on behalf of their women, that the strongest tie by which a state can be bound is the being required to give, among the number of hostages, maidens of noble birth."

Whether the life of a German woman were happier in peace than in war, it is difficult to say. When not engaged in fighting or hunting, the men did nothing except eat, drink, and sleep. The management of the Teutonic household and of the land was made over to the women, the old men, and all the weakest members of a family. Their agricultural toil was probably slight enough, since they scratched rather than ploughed the ground, and the crops of wheat and rye were consequently as small as can well be imagined. Their barley crop was doubtless better, since they extracted from that grain a fermented liquor bearing a certain resemblance to wine. Of this beverage Tacitus speaks with seeming contempt, as all dwellers in a wine land are wont to do of beer or ale potations. He adds, to show

the higher civilisation of the races on the river-bank —the Rhine—"*they* buy wine." Their food, he says, is of a simple kind, consisting of wild fruit, curdled milk, and fresh game. The barbarians had not arrived at the knowledge of well-kept venison, or grouse, or blackcock. Doubtless the women derived some consolations for their hard life in millinery. They wore indeed "the same dress as the men, except that they generally wrap themselves in linen garments which they embroider with purple." One female fashion has descended from the German ladies to a remote posterity. It seems that to make a sleeve for cloak or tunic passed their skill, so "the upper and lower arm is bare, and the nearest part of the bosom is also exposed." Care of their children, indeed, did not take up much of their time. "In every household, naked and filthy, they grew up with those stout frames and limbs which we so much admire." Their families were numerous, for we are told, with a well-merited reproof of Roman fathers and mothers, that "to limit the number of their children or to destroy any of their subsequent offspring is accounted infamous." Baby-farming was reserved for the use of more civilised nations.

In one respect the Germans set the Greeks and Romans a good example, and perhaps gave a wholesome hint to more recent times. They did not go so far as to permit their wives and daughters to vote at elections, yet in some sense they admitted women's rights. "They believe," says Tacitus, "that the sex has a certain sanctity and prescience, and they do not despise their counsels, or make light of their answers. We have seen in the days of Vespasian, Veleda, who was long regarded by many as a divinity.

In former times, too, they venerated Aurania and many other women, but not with servile flatteries and shameful deifications." This is apparently a parting compliment to the Cæsars, who, if they did not themselves adore, required their subjects to deify imperial wives. The respect which Tacitus displays for these female diviners was bestowed on their prophetic gifts alone, and did not extend to their sex generally; for in his brief account of a tribe called Sitones he says, "They are ruled by a *woman*, so low have they fallen, not merely from freedom, but even from slavery itself."

In these notes on the domestic condition of the Germans, it is hardly possible to mistake the purpose of Tacitus. In the hardy lives and warlike activity of the Germans he glances at the extravagance and luxury of the Roman nobles of his time. In their poverty, a consequence of their ignorance and indolence when at peace, in their chastity, politic because of their poverty, he saw an image, though a rude one, of those ages of Rome when consuls drove their own ploughs, or "roasted turnips on a Sabine farm." In many a German hovel might be found a counterpart of a Cato or a Siccius Dentatus, but not one of a Sejanus or a Tigellinus; in many a German swamp or forest dwelt a Cornelia and her young Gracchi, an Agrippina, a chaste and fruitful wife, but neither a Messalina nor a Poppæa.

The following sketch of a German village has led some to suppose it drawn by an eyewitness:—

"The natives of Germany have no cities; they do not even tolerate closely contiguous dwellings. They live scattered and apart, just as a spring, a meadow, or a wood has attracted them. Their villages they do not

arrange in our fashion, with the buildings connected and joined together; but every person surrounds his dwelling with an open space, either as a precaution against the disasters of fire, or because they do not know how to build. No use is made by them of stone or tile; they employ timber for all purposes—rude masses, without ornament or attractiveness. Some parts of their buildings they stain more carefully with a clay so clear and bright that it resembles painting, or a coloured design. They are wont also to dig out subterranean caves and pile on them great heaps of dung as a shelter from winter, and as a receptacle for the year's produce, for by such places they mitigate the rigour of the cold."

The account of the religion of the Germans given by Tacitus differs materially from that of Cæsar; but the opportunities of the later writer may have been the better. Mercury, he says, they honoured most among deities; at certain seasons they deemed it expedient to propitiate him by the sacrifice of human victims. To Hercules and Mars they offered animals, and a portion of the Suevic nation practised the worship of Isis.

The fondness of both Greek and Roman writers for identifying their own rites and mythology with those of less civilised or imperfectly known countries throws much obscurity on the history of religion generally. It is scarcely necessary to apprise the English reader that Mercury and Hercules, Mars and Isis, were as little known to the Germans as the Syrian Astarte or the Punic Moloch. Cæsar denies the existence of a priestly caste among the Germans, and Tacitus nowhere actually contradicts him; for the "priest of a state"

whom he mentions is more akin to the great "medicine-man" of a tribe of American Indians, than to the colleges of the Gaulish Druids, or to the sacred corporations of India, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. In public matters, he says, the gods are invoked by the state priest, in private by the father of the family, and each derives the divine answer through the medium of lots, or small pieces of wood cut from the bough of a fruit-bearing tree. This, however, is only the first step in the inquiry. The answer must be confirmed by augury, and birds by their song or their flight are the organs of the divine will. So far the Roman and German soothsayers were much alike, and probably the less civilised were the more pious of the two, for we do not read of the Teutonic augurs, as we do of the Roman, that when they met one another in the street they found it hard to look grave. Horses, too—and "this," he says, "is peculiar to this people"—were mediums for omens and warnings. What follows has a very oriental aspect, reminding us of the omen drawn from the neighing of King Darius's horse.* "Kept at the public expense in these same woods and groves are white horses, pure from the taint of earthly labour. These are yoked to a car, and accompanied by the priest and the king or chief of the tribe, who note their neighings and snortings. No species of augury is more trusted, not only by the people and the nobility, but also by the priests, who regard themselves as the ministers of the gods, and the horses as acquainted with their will."

There is a remark by Tacitus, in a graver tone and

* Herodotus, iii. 84.

in a higher mood, corresponding closely with one he makes on the religious belief of the Jews. He appears to have been struck by the purity, if not the sublimity, of the Teutonic creed. "The Germans," he says, "believe that the gods cannot be confined within walls, nor, by reason of the vastness of their nature, be represented under the similitude of any human figure." But although they built not temples nor carved images, they were not without certain places dedicated to national worship. Their shrines were sacred spots in the depth of forests, and the gloom of the shrine symbolised a grave and gloomy ritual. To these sacred recesses they gave the names of their deities, and approached them with awe as the habitation of the unseen powers whom they worshipped. Of these sanctuaries the roof was the sky, the columns were the trees; and the historian, among other contrasts between the Roman and the Teuton of his time, may have had in view the gilded roofs, the marble pillars, and the numerous statues he saw in the Pantheon of Agrippa or the fane of Jupiter in the Capitol.

There were kings in many of the German tribes, but their power was not unlimited or arbitrary. The king was expected to expose his person in battle, as well as to command the army. There were two houses of Parliament. The chiefs deliberated about minor matters, the whole tribe about more important ones. The assemblies for debate, except in cases of sudden emergency, were held on certain fixed days, either at new or full moon. Like assemblies of more recent date, the Germans wasted a good deal of time before they applied in earnest to business. A century has not elapsed since members of our House of Com-

mons wore small swords in St Stephen's Chapel; and the Teutonic legislators sat on their benches of turf armed. "Silence," we are told, was proclaimed by the priests, who, like "Mr Speaker," did not take part in the debate, but had the right of keeping order. "The king or the chief, according to age, birth, distinction in war or eloquence, is heard more because he has influence to persuade than because he has power to command." Murmurs indicated the 'Noes,' brandishing of spears the 'Ayes,' in this primitive Parliament. Of their skill in husbandry Tacitus has little favourable to say. The vine was yet to be introduced into Rhineland, fruit-trees were rarely if ever planted, and there was a plausible excuse for the omission of orchards. In the first place, the German was a migratory animal; in the next, a fighting one. In either case a stranger or a foe would very likely have been the better for what he had not himself planted or grafted. For cereals the soil generally was too stiff, too sandy, or too wet: to drain the swamps, to irrigate the sand, demanded labour and cost, and the German was too indolent, too poor, and too restless, to undertake anything beyond the rudest agricultural work. He succeeded better as a grazier,—he often owned vast herds of cattle; but here again the farmer of the south far surpassed him, for his domestic kine were small in size and rough in coat, as inferior to the white breed of Umbria, or the herds that were pastured in the Abruzzi during the summer, and in Apulia during the winter months, as a German boat was to a Roman galley. The horses, like the Cossack ponies, were hardy and capable of enduring long journeys, but shaggy and low of stature. The Batavians alone among the northern nations had

chargers fit for cavalry, and supplied the legions with excellent steeds and skilful and bold riders.

His admiration of the virtues, as he esteemed them, did not blind Tacitus to the vices of the Germans. Of these the most glaring were drunkenness and gambling. Like all races in a state of barbarism, the German, so long as food was not at hand, endured hunger with stoical patience; but when he had it he made up for abstinence by excess. But drunkenness was his capital failing. Like the gods in Walhalla, these mortals gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the hospitable board was often stained with the blood of some of the company. Still, in their cups there seems to have been some discretion; for, says Tacitus,—

"It is at their feasts that they generally consult on the reconciliation of enemies, on the forming of matrimonial alliances, on the choice of chiefs, finally even on peace and war; for they think that at no time is the mind more open to simplicity of purpose or more warmed to noble aspirations. A race without either natural or acquired cunning, they disclose their hidden thoughts in the freedom of festivity. Thus, the sentiments of all having been discovered and laid bare, the discussion is renewed on the following day; and from each occasion its own peculiar advantage is derived. They deliberate when they have no power to dissemble; they resolve when error is impossible."

As to their gambling, the Germans appear to have surpassed the most civilised of mankind. It was a serious occupation even when they were sober; and so venturesome were they about gaining or losing, that "when every other resource has failed, on the last and

final throw they stake the freedom of their own persons. The loser goes into voluntary slavery. Though the younger and stronger, he suffers himself to be bound and sold."

Among the numerous varieties of the human race who flocked to Rome, the Germans had many representatives. They usually formed the Cæsar's guard, as the Scotch archers at first, and the Swiss *mousquetaires* afterwards, did that of the French kings. The cavalry was no longer composed of Roman knights or Italians, and the Batavian horse had become an almost indispensable adjunct to the legions. A brother of the Cheruscan Arminius served in the Roman army, and boasted of his services and loyalty to Augustus and Tiberius. Civilis, the Batavian chief, had been trained in a Roman barrack, and had smarted under a centurion's rod. Here, then, was at hand an ample supply of men able to enlighten an historian of the German people — an advantage, however, of which Tacitus, so far at least as ethnology is concerned, seems not to have availed himself to any great extent.

We now turn from this curious, and in part perhaps fanciful, account of the German nations. In what relation it stands to the other writings of Tacitus can never be known. It is the only one of them that has not an introductory preface. It bears some marks of not being completed; and may very possibly have been an early draft or an abandoned design of a full history of the German wars similar in kind to the one already mentioned—Pliny the elder's.

CHAPTER IV.

THE 'ANNALS.'

TIBERIUS.

THE title of this work may not be inviting to some English readers. It may suggest to them the idea of a note-book in which rough materials are collected for a complete and polished narrative. They have doubtless observed in the most attractive historical works frequent references to monkish annals—to Camden's and Strype's, for instance, the authorities for much dreary political or ecclesiastical controversy. But no one need anticipate in the 'Annals' of Tacitus any dulness. Far from being the dry bones of some purposed record, they are among the most signal examples of thoughtful, interesting, and brilliant narration. They abound in anecdote; their by-ways are often not less pleasant than the main road; they take the reader into many lands; introduce him to many forms of life and manners. The keystone of the arch is indeed Rome and its Cæsar, but the arch of description itself is wide in its span: the 'Annals' are "the roof and crown" of the mighty master's genius.

The 'Annals' commence with the death of Augustus, A.D. 14, and, when in a perfect state, closed with the death of Nero, in 68. In them were related the events of fifty-four years. They are less mutilated than the

'History,' yet they have in some respects suffered far more severely, inasmuch as we lose in the later of the author's works many more important scenes and events than were treated of in the earlier. Of the fifth book of the 'Annals' the greater part has perished; the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth no longer exist, and of the eleventh a considerable part is missing. By the imperfect condition of the fifth book we are left to learn from other and inferior writers, many of whom lived long after the time of Tiberius, the real character of Sejanus's conspiracy. By the entire absence of four books we are without such a narrative as Tacitus alone could pen, of the whole of Caligula's reign and of the first five years of that of Claudius. By the mutilation of the sixteenth, we are deprived of the necessary materials for understanding the causes and motives of the revolt which hurled from a throne he had so long abused the last of the Julian Cæsars.

It is impossible to attempt giving a mere abstract of the 'Annals' as they have come down to us. Condensation is seldom satisfactory: an epitome can hardly fail to be more or less obscure. We must be content with dwelling on a few only of the more striking scenes or persons delineated by the historian. The first six books may be regarded as a portrait of Tiberius. He, present or absent from the scenes of action, whether they relate to war or peace, is the pivot on which the machine of government revolves. He was neither, like Claudius, the servant of his own freedmen, nor, like Nero, the companion of singers, dancers, gladiators, and charioteers. History presents few characters so difficult to decipher as that of Tiberius. Even Tacitus's summary of his virtues and vices can

hardly be reconciled with facts or consistency. Most unpopular with every class at Rome, and in its immediate neighbourhood, he was regarded by the provincials as a wise, a temperate, and even a beneficent sovereign. It almost seems as if there had been one emperor in the capital and another outside its walls.

After relating the death of Tiberius, Tacitus says—"He ruled the Roman state with absolute sway. His manners also varied with the conditions of his fortune. His conduct was exemplary and his reputation high while in a private capacity, or holding dignities under Augustus. While Germanicus and Drusus were yet alive, his manners were reserved and mysterious, artfully assuming the merit of virtues to which he had no claim. While his mother survived, his character exhibited a compound of good and evil. While he loved or feared Sejanus, though detested for his cruelties, he observed a secrecy and caution in the gratification of his evil passions; but at last when all restraints of shame and fear were removed, and he was left to the uncontrolled bent of his genius, he broke out into acts of atrocious villainy and revolting depravity."*

The historian who penned this very antithetical character, opens his fourth book with a high testimony to Tiberius during the first nine years of his reign. He ruled indeed with absolute sway, and so, virtually, had Augustus done before him: it was the "hard condition twin-born with their greatness;" but while his predecessor had the art to veil with roses the chains he imposed, it was always the ill-luck of Tiberius to display them, and often inopportunely. For a period of eight years at least he "intrusted to the senate all the

* Annals, vi. ch. 51.

public and all private business of importance: to the leading members of it he allowed liberty of debate: he checked flattery of himself; in his preferments he was guided by merit, by ancient nobility, by renown in war, by ability in civil accomplishments, insomuch that his appointments to office were universally approved. Consuls and prætors retained the usual distinctions of their offices; inferior magistrates their proper authority; and the laws, except in cases of treason, were beneficially administered. The tithes, taxes, and public revenues were managed by companies of Roman knights: the Cæsar's own affairs were conducted by men of eminent probity, some of whom were known to him only by their good repute; and when once engaged by him, they were retained without any restriction of term, and most of them grew old in the same employment. Dearth of provisions at times distressed the people, but through no fault of the prince, who spared neither pains nor expense to remedy the deficiency of food, whether it were owing to storms at sea delaying the corn-fleets, or to bad harvests. He took care that the provinces should not be oppressed by new taxes, and that the already existing burdens should not be rendered intolerable by the strictness or rapacity of the farmers of the revenue." "My sheep," it was a favourite maxim of his, "may be shorn, but not flayed by you." Corporal punishments and confiscation of goods were unknown. Many a noble owned far more landed property in Italy than the emperor did: many a rich man possessed more freedmen and slaves: and the behaviour of the imperial slaves was modest, which could not always be said of the senatorial bondmen. If he had any suits with private persons, he referred them

as if he had been a simple citizen to the courts and the law.

Tiberius, when the death of Augustus was publicly announced—he had not arrived in time from the Dalmatian coast to be present at the last moments of the dying Cæsar—entered at once upon his important duties as commander of the army, governor-general of the provinces, and tribune of the people; and thus had virtually in his hands all the essentials of imperial power. Secure of these, he awaited, until after the funeral of Augustus, his nomination as Prince of the Senate. And at this point, in the view taken of him by Tacitus, began that system of dissimulation which he followed through a long reign. It might have been more honest to demand, but it was perhaps more politic, as well as decent, to court the suffrages of the senate. The account of the Cæsar's hesitation in accepting, of the senators' eager servility, in imploring him to consent to accept, the only dignity that was not his already, is among the historian's masterpieces of description. Tacitus says that Tiberius never faltered, except in the presence of the conscript-fathers. One motive for his hesitation was a dread that in his nephew Germanicus he might find a formidable rival, and there was not time to assure himself of the loyalty and honorable feelings of that darling of the Roman people. Another but less obvious cause for delay, was his repugnance to be regarded as the nominee of his mother Livia, who not only at the moment had secured her son's quiet accession, but also had obtained for him from the reluctant Augustus every office comprised in the *imperium*—except that of Prince of the Senate. Moreover, there were members on the senatorial

benches whom the late emperor had suggested might contest with the son of Livia the succession to the empire. The suspicions were idle: the senate had been too long trained in subservience to have a voice of its own: but, although idle, they were not ineffectual, as the objects of them found in due time to their cost. Perhaps there was yet another motive for real or affected hesitation in Tiberius on this occasion. He loved to read men's thoughts; to analyse their motives; to balance in his own scale their words and deeds, and to draw his own conclusions as to what was merely lip-service, and what was a real desire that he should ascend the vacant throne. Their votes and voices he could easily have constrained: he preferred to draw out the actual sentiments of his courtiers. His dissimulation will hardly be accounted unwise, if we bear in mind that Tiberius at no one period of his life was a favorite of the Roman people. Their love and hopes had been lavished on his deceased brother Drusus, and now were transferred, in measure heaped and running over, to the son of Drusus, the young, handsome, brave, and gracious Germanicus.

More formidable dangers than political intrigues occupied the attention of Tiberius at the very moment he commenced his reign. The legions in Pannonia broke out into mutiny as soon as they heard of the death of Augustus; and their conduct was the more alarming from the fact that six years before there had been in the same quarter a revolt of the same troops, which Tiberius himself had been sent to put down, and which, as it proved, he had "scotched but not killed." There was the more reason for prompt action, because the mutineers could in a fort-

night reach Italy, and in three weeks the capital itself, which was then slenderly supplied with guards, for the most effective divisions of the army were stationed in Upper or Lower Germany. The mutiny was sufficiently grave to render it necessary for the emperor to despatch his son Drusus, and one of the prætorian prefects, Ælius Sejanus, with a formidable force of cavalry and veteran infantry, to the Pannonian camp. A timely eclipse, however, so disheartened the rebels, that, after committing many atrocities, they returned to their standards under the impression that the gods frowned on their revolt.

But if the Pannonian revolt was a spark, a mutiny of the legions in Upper and Lower Germany threatened to be a devouring flame. For there, in both provinces, the disaffected soldiers were in the immediate neighbourhood of the free Germans, proud of their demolition of Varus and his army five years before, and ever watching for an opportunity to cross to the left bank of the Rhine. The most popular general of the day, the Cæsar Germanicus, was in command of eight legions—a force that with auxiliaries consisted of at least 60,000 men. Tiberius might affect to dread some half-dozen of the nobles, but he was sincere in his apprehensions of his adopted son. Him indeed he suspected unjustly. The noble and loyal disposition of Germanicus was a riddle to the moody and timid master of thirty legions, and he probably distrusted him the more for a straightforward dealing of which he was himself incapable. To hear from successive messengers that the legions of the Rhine were in revolt; that they had offered to proclaim their commander Cæsar; that they had demanded and

received from him a *largesse;* that not merely Germanicus, but also his wife, Agrippina, were the darlings of the mutineers; and that even his little grandson Caius, the future Caligula, was their pet,—might alarm a stouter heart than Tiberius possessed. The name of Germanicus alone would have thrown open the city gates, and the servile aristocracy would have joyfully deposed, and probably put to death, a chief whom they disliked, and repeated their oath of allegiance to a Cæsar, beloved equally by senate, soldiers, and people.

The mutineers expiated their crimes by an apparently promiscuous slaughter of their leaders. But both summer and winter camps were become odious to them, and the blood of German foes alone could, in their opinion, wash out the stain of their rebellion and sanguinary remorse. Germanicus, though autumn was already advanced, hurried them over the Rhine, and indulged them with a brief campaign. To trace his steps through two following campaigns in Germany, would demand far more space than we can afford, and also weary the reader with details of events which had no important consequences, and in which the only character of any interest is that of Arminius, the Cheruscan chief. The story of this German hero indeed belongs more to the annals of Augustus than to those of Tiberius, since it was in the earlier reign of the two that he achieved, by a combination of craft and valour, the destruction of Varus and his legions. Against Germanicus his success was far less signal, although by skilfully contrived movements and indomitable energy he baffled the invaders, seriously thinned their ranks, and more

than once reduced the Roman general to straits which, but for the discipline of the legions, would a second time have lost Rome a general and an army. In 16 A.D. Germanicus was recalled from the Rhine. He was accorded a magnificent triumph, of which to Roman spectators the most attractive feature was the presence of the hero and his five children riding in the same chariot. Yet this portion of the spectacle excited not merely sentiments of pride and hope, but also gloomy anticipations of the future. The people called to mind, "that popular favour had proved calamitous to his father Drusus; that his uncle Marcellus was snatched in his youth from the ardent affections of the populace; and that ever short-lived and unfortunate were the favorites of the Roman people." The prediction, not uttered with bated breath, doubtless reached the ears of Tiberius, and bore baneful fruit in later years, when his "fears stuck deep" in Agrippina and her sons.

The presence of Germanicus, now consul, was urgently needed in the Eastern provinces, where the death of Augustus had given rise to disturbances on the Armenian and Parthian frontiers, and where, also, the civil government appears to have required the presence of a vice-emperor. The removal of the young and successful general is ascribed by Tacitus to the fear or jealousy of Tiberius, but there is no reason to impute such motives to him. Had Tacitus lived in the reign of Tiberius, we should perhaps have been told by him, that the Claudian Cæsar had seen much service in the Rhenish and Danubian districts, and knew better than Germanicus how to deal with barbarians. So long as the legions were burning their

villages, devastating their fields, and chasing them across morass, forest, and river, the Germans were tolerably united in a common cause. Whereas, rid of the invader, they were pretty sure to quarrel with one another; and thus, by their civil wars, they served Rome far more effectually than she could serve herself by the expenditure of blood and treasure. The campaigns of Germanicus had really no important result. The Germans were often defeated, but never conquered; and perhaps a Teutonic Tacitus would have told of more Roman reverses than the Roman one thought meet to chronicle. From the 'Annals' alone it is clear that the invaders suffered severely from the natural difficulties of a land void of roads and bridges, and studded with swamps and pathless woods. Clear, also, it is, that even in pitched battle the Romans' rank and file suffered severely, and were cumbered by their own armour; while their lightly-clad opponents fought with ease and agility, knee-deep in water, or amid the gloom of a primeval forest. And however successful at the opening, Germanicus was with one exception—his first inroad—always unfortunate at the close of his campaigns. He lost his flotilla: he sacrificed many hundreds, at the very least, of valuable soldiers in extricating himself from the sodden and slippery marshes, many, also, in cutting his way through forest and ambush, many by sudden and unexpected assaults, and many by the false reports of his guides.

By appointing Germanicus to the viceroyalty of the Eastern provinces, the emperor might seem to have ceased to fear him, and to have gratified the wishes of all ranks in Rome. The choice, indeed, was, to all appearance, most happy. Had the tribes been polled,

he was the person whom they would have voted for unanimously: had the senate been consulted, there would have been no division: had the name of their favorite been referred to the army, there would have been a universal clashing of shields, and loud and ringing huzzas in assent. But Tiberius marred the grace of this appointment by accompanying it with that of one who was notoriously an enemy of the proconsul. Among the proudest of Roman houses, at the time, was that of the Pisones. Calpurnius Piso had his full share of the family pride, and saw in Germanicus, not the hero of the people, but the descendant of the plebeian Drusi. Yet of all the magnates of the time, it was this Piso who was chosen for the post of 'coadjutor' to the young proconsul.

The story of the later days of Germanicus is one of several enigmas we find in the 'Annals.' He insinuates that there was a court-cabal against him and his wife—the one was to be narrowly watched by Piso, the other by Piso's wife Plancina. In the latter suspicion there was, perhaps, the more truth; for Livia, whose influence was still great with Tiberius, did not conceal her hatred of Agrippina. The historian hints that there were ugly stories about the cause of Germanicus's death—idle stories, perhaps; yet it could not be denied that whether to gratify his own malice, or in obedience to secret instructions received by him, Piso thwarted every plan or movement of his chief, and misinterpreted his words and acts. Certainly, if they had such orders, Piso and Plancina most punctiliously obeyed them. Go whither he might, do whatever he might, privately or officially, the conduct of Germanicus, and without question of

Agrippina as well, was reported of unfavourably to the Cæsar on the Palatine and his mother. As a token of respect for the fountainhead of Western philosophy and literature, and to display his reverence for the birthplace of so many illustrious statesmen and philosophers, orators, and poets, Germanicus, during a brief visit to Athens, laid aside every outward symbol of his high office, and, attended by a single lictor, walked in the streets, and visited the temples, the schools, the gymnasia, and the theatres of the city of Pallas. This, certainly harmless, and probably sincere, homage to the memory of the mighty dead, appeared to the jaundiced eye of Piso an affront to the dignity of Rome. "Was it seemly in Cæsar's son to be civil to such a pack of hybrid vagabonds as then were the Athenian people? Was it proper for one who represented the majesty of the empire, to curry favour with the offscouring of various nations, with fellows whose great-grandsires had leagued with Mithridates against Sylla, and whose grandsires had fought with Antony against Augustus?" During an interval of business, the proconsul sailed up the Nile and contemplated the great works of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies. This pilgrimage, when reported to Tiberius, gave him much offence. And he severely censured Germanicus for entering the capital of Egypt without permission from the prince. "For Augustus," he wrote, "among other secret rules of power, had appropriated Egypt and restrained the senators and dignified Roman knights from going thither without licence; as he apprehended that Italy might be distressed with famine by every one who seized that province — the key to the empire by sea and land, and defensible by

a small garrison of men against large armies." In neglecting to obtain a passport, Germanicus was indiscreet; yet, surely, by refusing the empire, when proffered by his soldiers, he had given a sufficient pledge of loyalty. Even a governor-general, accompanied by a few tribunes and centurions, on a journey of pleasure, need not have reasonably alarmed the lord of thirty legions.

All cause for fear or jealousy was soon at an end. Within a few weeks after his return from Egypt the hope and pride of the empire was stretched on a sick-bed, and passed away from friends and lovers, from foes and spies, in the capital of Syria, Antioch. Often as one of their beloved princes died unexpectedly, the Roman people, with a credulity not uncommon in modern Europe, believed that he had met with foul play. The most absurd stories of magical arts and poisoning sprang up, and were accepted by the populace, and doubtless by many dressed in senatorial attire. At the trial of Piso for the imputed murder of his commander, and contempt of his orders, the disobedience of the coadjutor was proved, but the charge of poisoning quite broke down, and, if we consider the circumstances, very justly. Even for a Piso it was not easy to drug the food of a man at his own table, in the presence of numerous guests and attendants. The illness of which Germanicus died appears to have been some species of fever. He had been suddenly transplanted from a cold and moist to a hot and dry climate—from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Orontes. His vexations were many; the acts and demeanour of Piso, and perhaps of Plancina also, can hardly have failed to have ex-

cited suspicions that his coadjutor had some secret warrant for his conduct. When a man is laid low by fever, some extra vexation is not unfavorable—to the disease.

If it be not easy to gather from the records we possess a satisfactory portrait of Tiberius, it is even more difficult to decipher the character of Sejanus. We are assured by Tacitus that the loss of Germanicus caused Tiberius no regret; on the contrary, he accounted that event among the "blessings of his reign." Fortune, he proceeds, now began to change the scene—that is, in the ninth year of his principate—and a train of disasters followed. The emperor began to throw off the mask—either by tyrannising himself, or encouraging and supporting others in tyrannical proceedings.

"The origin and cause of this change," he says, "are attributable to Ælius Sejanus, commander of the Prætorian Guards. He was born at Bolsena [Vulsinii]; his father was Seius Strabo, a Roman knight; in early youth he attached himself to Caius Cæsar, grandson of the deified Augustus. By various acts he subsequently gained such an ascendancy over Tiberius, that though he was close and mysterious in his intercourse with others, he threw off all restraint and reserve with him. His person was hardy and equal to fatigues; his spirit daring; expert in disguising his own iniquities, prompt to spy out the failings of others; at once fawning and imperious"—this is no uncommon combination; "with an exterior of assumed modesty, his heart insatiably lusted for supreme domination." "And with this view he engaged sometimes in profusion, largesses, and luxury; but more frequently gave himself to business and watching, practices no less dangerous, when

counterfeited by ambition for the acquisition of power."

That such a person as Sejanus should ever have existed, Tacitus ascribes to the wrath of the gods against the Roman state, to which this minister "was equally fatal in the height of his power and his death." Had he confined the fatality to Tiberius himself, we should have been the more inclined to agree with the historian; he in fact ascribes to the minister the political depravation of the emperor.

The first important measure of Sejanus was to concentrate the prætorians, or imperial body-guard, in one camp. Hitherto this division of the army had been quartered either in the capital or in neighbouring towns. They appear to have been billeted on private householders or lodged in taverns, and were doubtless, in the one case, a nuisance to their hosts, while, in the other, they were put in the way of evil companions. Viewed at the moment it was effected, and not judged of by its results, this collection of the guards into one camp appears to have been a prudent measure—one that even a wise and honest minister might have devised or sanctioned. It assured the Government of ready support when needed; it would protect respectable citizens from the fury of a Roman mob, like those which occasionally disgraced the later years of the commonwealth. It was, in fact, a very similar innovation to that in our own history, when a standing army took the place of a militia; and it was more the fault of the time than of the change which rendered the prætorians the tools of Cæsar, or the arbiters or donors of imperial power. An Augustus, who knew how to win the affections as well as the respect of his subjects, could dispense with a

camp near at hand; but for a Tiberius, who possessed no attractive qualities, and who was, perhaps, as much disliked by the citizens as he was feared by the nobles, such a bulwark may have been indispensable.

Plots, or the suspicion of them, thickened very soon after the reins of government were placed in the hands of Sejanus. The upper classes, who looked on the Claudian prince as a supplanter of the Julian line, yet more deeply resented the intrusion of one whom they regarded as an upstart—the obscure offspring of a borough town (*municipalis*), having no ancestral claims on their respect, and whose family name had never been inscribed on the calendar of consuls (*Fasti*). Like the favorite counsellor of Augustus, Sejanus came of an old Etruscan house; but Mæcenas had never risen above the rank of a knight, and was modest in his demeanour and habits of life. On the contrary, the man whom Tiberius delighted to honor was notorious for his arrogance, and the higher he rose in public rank or imperial favor, the more he was fawned upon and hated. When Cæsar indeed proclaimed the virtues of this lucky adventurer, who would dare to call them in question? In everything the emperor, now advanced in years, weary of public business, and conscious that he was detested by a majority of the Roman citizens, gave way to Sejanus. The weak bent to the strong will—the man who could rise no higher to the man who was still climbing up ambition's ladder. So ostentatious was his favor, perhaps, for a while, so sincere his friendship, that, in his speeches and letters to the senate, Tiberius frequently made honorable mention of Sejanus. He was his guide, his other self, in the government of the empire. Careless of public

honors himself, shunning rather than courting applause from his subjects, Tiberius was gratified when such distinctions were conferred on his minister. He permitted statues and busts of the Etruscan to be placed beside his own in the forum and the law courts, in the prætorian barracks and the camps of the legions; nor did he evince any jealousy when the senate decreed one altar to Clemency, another altar to Friendship, and set up around them portraits of himself and Sejanus.

The most terrible weapon in the hands of Sejanus was that furnished by the public informer (*delatores*). It did not originate with him, but he worked the machine with an energy unknown before. He had many reasons for rendering the function of informer more effective. The Cæsar was timid and suspicious, and easily persuaded, after a while, that his life or his authority was assailed by the persons who counted his days, arraigned his policy, or spoke of his private conduct. The nobles regarded the minister with envy and contempt—with the one for his nearness to the Cæsar, with the other for his obscure origin. Again, Sejanus could not entertain a hope of succeeding Tiberius, unless he could isolate him from his own family and his immediate friends. "The imperial house full of Cæsars," writes Tacitus, "the emperor's son in the vigour of manhood, and his grandsons grown up, were obstacles to his ambition; and because to cut them off all at once was dangerous, the success of his treacherous plot required that the horrid deeds should be perpetrated by slow degrees." From the army and the populace he expected and experienced no opposition. The former, although they were Roman soldiers, were rarely Roman by birth, and, even if they knew the names of old and noble families,

they were ignorant of the deeds by which the Fabii, the Scipios, the Cornelii, or the Gracchi had raised themselves to the consulate and the senatorial bench. The latter, with the mean spirit of a mob in all times, rejoiced in the humiliation of men of rank, and saw in every illustrious victim a kind of sacrifice to their own envy. A Roman mob was always ready to cry, "A bas les aristocrats!" and a London or Parisian one is always ready to do the like. Among the earliest and certainly the most conspicuous victims struck down by Sejanus, was Drusus, the emperor's only son. But the direct heir to the purple was beyond the informer's shaft: and the prince-imperial was murdered by the aid of his young wife Livia, whom an adulterous connection had previously brought into the snares of the ambitious minister. It was against the widow of Germanicus, her sons, and their adherents, that he first let slip his bloodhounds. With Agrippina it was less difficult to deal. She was indeed far from friendless among the great: she was the darling of the Roman people: and the soldiers reverenced in her the relict of their deceased and beloved commander. But the great could gradually be mown down, by the aid of informers. The unarmed populace were helpless; and the victims of information were despatched with a secrecy that eluded the notice of the soldiers. Agrippina herself afforded opportunities to her foes. With all his admiration of her, as a sample of the woman of a bygone age, Tacitus does not conceal the infirmities of her temper. Her haughty demeanour, her unguarded tongue, her bursts of passion, were the source of many sorrows to herself, of her ultimate ruin, and of that of many of her friends and partisans. The last injunc-

tions of the dying Germanicus were addressed to her. "Then turning to his wife," writes the annalist, "he adjured her by her remembrance of him, by their common children, to divest herself of her unbending spirit and bow to fortune in the storm of her anger; and, on her return to the city, not to irritate those who were more than a match for her, by a competition for the mastery. So much was said by him openly, and more in secret." The injunction was in vain: year by year the number of her supporters diminished: the brave and loyal were driven to suicide, or into exile, or handed over to the executioner: the timid forsook her or became spies on her actions and words; and she herself, by occasional indiscretions, nursed the jealousy or incurred the anger of Tiberius. Of her three sons one only survived her; and she herself, after undergoing countless indignities, died, it is said, of starvation in the island of Ponza (Pontia).

In his designs against the family of Germanicus, Sejanus, if not aided, was not crossed by the aged widow of Augustus. To Agrippina and her children Livia felt, and did not conceal it, all the hatred of a stepmother. The favor which she extended to her eldest son Tiberius, seems not to have included his brother Drusus—assuredly not Drusus' sons. The despotic and dangerous old woman, whom, for her crafty and intriguing spirit, Caligula called "a Ulysses in petticoats"—was more likely to cherish the jealousy of the Cæsar, and applaud the plans of his minister, than to shelter from their cruelty Agrippina and her orphaned children.

The function of Public Informer (*delator*) is one of the most perplexing features in Cæsarian history. It

is hard to imagine life endurable under such a system of police. It affected every order of society except the lowest,—senators, knights, magistrates, and military officers—the busy, the idle—the very young, the very old—men conspicuous for their virtues, and sometimes also for their honourable poverty, and men notorious for their vices, and sometimes for their wealth. A harmless country-gentleman was not more secure in his park than was the occupier of a stately mansion on the Palatine. The informer's bolt was not "the arrow which flies in darkness." There was nothing in the system like the privacy of the Inquisition, of the Vehmgericht, or the Venetian Council of Ten. The emissaries of a Delator did not stick a citation on the pillow of his victim, nor drop it into a lion's mouth—the government post-office. Whatever was done by the Roman informer was done openly. He was not ashamed of his calling: it brought him money and distinction: and he gloried in the means that raised him from obscurity. And yet when no one was secure, men revelled as well as lived under this reign of terror, drank old Falernian and feasted on Lucrine oysters and Umbrian boars as cheerfully as if they were as sure of the morrow as of its sunrise and sunset.

Political eloquence, at least on any grand scale, expired with the commonwealth, for where there are no parties in a State there can be but few occasions for debate. In the law courts, at the city-prætor's tribunal, and when there was an impeachment argued before the senate, there was still a field for wordy war; and if we may trust to the reminiscences of the elder Seneca, to the reports of Tacitus, to Pliny's Letters, to Quintilian, and other writers of the time, many of the Delators

were persons of great ability, and by no means contemptible as public speakers. Some of them were of ignoble birth, others were scions of ancient families, whom, whether high-born or low-born, ambition, poverty, or fashion—for there are endemics in public life as well as in certain states of the air—impelled to take up the profession of public prosecutor. Knights and senators did not blush to make a traffic of their eloquence and accomplishments; while a "new man"—that is, one who had no "blue blood" in his veins or waxen images in his hall—might, in dragging a culprit, or quite as likely an innocent person, before the senate, complaisantly compare himself to a tribune of the people in bygone days. In case of conviction, a portion of the fine fell regularly to their share, and it was often augmented by a special remuneration also. But money was not their sole reward. At a later time there was coined the proverb that Galen—a good medical practice—brought wealth; and Justinian—briefs at the bar—led to honors.* The informer, however, besides filling his pocket, reaped an ample harvest of political eminence and notoriety akin to fame. Hardly any one of this class of them, according to Tacitus or Pliny, possessed any private virtues. They were as covetous as they were unprincipled; but their greed of gain was limited to getting it, for the most part: they squandered their enormous fees, bribes, or gratuities as rapidly as they pocketed them. Frequently they suffered the misery they had inflicted: a rich informer was an irresistible temptation to a brother of the craft; or a Cæsar whose profusion had drained the treasury,

* "Dat Galenus opes, dat Justinianus honores."

made little scruple in banishing or strangling a prosperous Delator, and seizing, for his own use, his goods, chattels, and investments. When a Cæsar like Vespasian or Trajan wore the purple robe, it was an evil day for informers; for then, if not handed over to the executioner, they were sent to some island prison, and it sometimes happened that the ship which carried them never reached any port.

Many more pages than we can afford might be occupied by an account of the rise and fall of these pernicious allies of despotism. We can only narrate a few of their exploits. It was accounted a crime against majesty—that is the concrete State—to perform before an emperor's effigy, even on a coin or ring, any act which would be deemed indecent in the presence of the emperor himself, such as to strip a slave for chastisement, or even to strip one's self for the bath. No public charge against an officer of the State or an illustrious citizen came to be thought complete, unless one of disrespect towards the Cæsar was annexed to it as a codicil. Silanus, proconsul of Asia, a friend of the deceased Germanicus, a partisan of the widowed Agrippina, was accused of extortion in his province. But no sooner was the impeachment published than a consular, an ædile, and a prætor brought other irrelevant charges against him,—among others, that he had profaned the divinity of Augustus and disparaged the majesty of Tiberius. Two profligate women of high birth, Apuleia and Lepida, were impeached for adultery and generally scandalous lives. But the accuser thought to strengthen his case by imputing to the former of them expressions of disrespect towards Augustus and Tiberius, and even the empress-mother

Livia Augusta; and to the latter the crime of consulting soothsayers about the destinies of the imperial family —of course including in her inquiry the important question, "How long is his majesty likely to live?" For a while it was necessary that the defendant should be proved guilty of some act or deed. Afterwards words spoken or written were admitted in evidence of disaffection, and many a scroll was burnt by the hangman in the Forum; and several authors died suddenly, because a volume in which Brutus and Cassius were extolled, or an unlucky epigram or pasquinade was found, was traced to their pen.

Impeachment of conspicuous citizens and party-leaders was no novelty in Rome: the commonwealth had bequeathed it to the empire, and the empire did little more than place it on a new platform. Laws on the subject of treason to the State (*majestas*) had existed from the days of the kings. Indictments of political or personal opponents were among the privileges and the barriers of public freedom, and the brightest laurels in the orator's crown were the convictions of a Scipio Asiaticus, a Verres, or a Catiline. But when the emperor united in his own person the various functions, civil and military, of the republic—when he was consul, prince of the senate, censor, pro-consul-general, commander of the army, and tribune of the people—when he could legally as well as logically say, *L'état, c'est moi*—the law of *majestas* applied to his person alone, since he was the only representative of the nobles, the knights, the people, the legions, and the subjects of Rome. Consequently he was the target at which all satirical arrows were aimed, the object of every conspiracy, the aim of every rebel. The

Julian law, borrowed by the first Cæsar from Sulla's legislation, but considerably modified, was confirmed and extended by his successor: but neither the popular Julius nor the prudent Augustus availed themselves of it, except under extreme provocation. It was not so with Tiberius. He was, out of a camp, a timid man; and after he had reigned several years, and his age was in the sere and yellow leaf, the consciousness of his own unpopularity, and the knowledge of machinations against him, exaggerated his fears into cruelty. The history of the public informers accordingly opens with this portion of the 'Annals,' and does not close until Domitian fell under the blows of a few conspirators whose own lives depended on their taking his.

It is creditable to Tiberius that he at first struggled against the informers. He rebuked their officious zeal: he would not permit a charge of high treason (*majestas*) to be mixed up with one of misgovernment of a province or scandal in private life. He met such accusations in a spirit worthy of a great monarch: he was, in these respects, less timid than our James I., less vindictive than either Philip II. of Spain or Louis XIV. In his better moods he commended liberty of speech. "In a free State," he was wont to say, "both mind and tongue should be free." But he was borne down by the current of the time. He was wearied by the servility of the senate: he was irritated by his own unpopularity, by pasquinades, by the rumour, if not by the reality, of plots against himself. He became, as he grew older, more and more distrustful of all about him, and when he discovered that even his own familiar friend, the man whom he had taken to his bosom and

treated as almost his partner in the empire, was false, mercy and justice alike departed from him, and the moody self-exile in Capri "let slip the dogs" of information against all who had followed and flattered, or were imagined to have done so, the arch-traitor Ælius Sejanus.

As regards his fame, no step Tiberius ever took was more fatal to it than his retiring to Capri. It was a mystery which no one of his subjects could fathom; but it was also a mystery that invited the worst interpretations. In the days of the commonwealth, a tribune of the people had increased his popularity by instructing an architect so to build him a house on the Capitoline Hill, that all his fellow-citizens might at any moment be able to see what he was doing. It was a similar seclusion in his Alban villa that rendered Domitian more obnoxious than ever to all classes in Rome. "No one," says Tacitus, "could have imagined that a Roman would voluntarily abandon his country for a period of eleven years." To modern ears the historian's words sound strangely. Capri was not so far from Rome as Edinburgh is from London, yet we should think the phrase extravagant, if a man, by going to the capital of Scotland, were accused of "abandoning" Britain. Far other import had the words in Roman ears.

Tiberius was in his sixty-seventh year when, on a pretext of dedicating a temple to Jupiter at Capua and to Augustus at Nola, he turned his back on Rome for ever. He was attended to the beautiful island of Capri, where he lived in seclusion for eleven years, by a very slender retinue;—by his minister Sejanus, now the ostensible if not the sole governor of the empire;

by one of the most eminent lawyers of the day, Cocceius Nerva; by one other senator, by one knight; by an astrologer or two—Chaldæans, as they were then usually called; and by a few learned Greeks. Busy and curious Rome very likely asked what occasion the Cæsar had for the presence of an eminent jurist? The Greek companions they could easily account for, since Tiberius had always dabbled in literature; and the Chaldæans excited no surprise, for, ever since his long exile in Rhodes, he had been an anxious inquirer into his own future, as well as that of men whom he feared or hated. Tiberius had often expressed an intention of visiting the provinces: galleys had been kept in readiness to convey him to Gaul or to the east: but he never carried out his purpose, and his indecision had become a by-word in Rome. His lingering in Campania, accordingly, and his seclusion in Capri, perplexed the senate and the people with wonder and fear.

For the fear there was good cause. Although he withdrew from the publicity of Rome and its tedious ceremonies, at all times repugnant to him, Tiberius did not retire from the business of the State. Far from doing so, the decrees and letters issued by him from the island, so far as we are acquainted with them, appear to have been among the worst samples of his jealousy and hatred of the senate. Tacitus and other historians lead us to impute to Sejanus the suggestions which excited the Cæsar to a long and uniform series of cruelties. And now it is plain why he took an expert lawyer with him. Tiberius was in matters of form a pedant; and therefore to advise him in criminal prosecutions, and to draw up death-warrants or sen-

tences of exile with legal precision, the presence of Cocceius Nerva was necessary. He, in fact, was a kind of "Secretary of the Hanging and Heading Department."

In the imperfect fifth and in the sixth book of the 'Annals' the history of Tiberius is completed. It is little more than the chronicle of suspicions and fears, and consequently increasing cruelty. An emperor, designed by nature for great and salutary ends—some of which in the first nine years of his reign he carried out—gradually sank into a tyrant, who was at once miserable himself, and terrible to at least the higher order of his subjects. Not until after the death of Sejanus did he learn the real story of his son's death. Apicata, the widow of the fallen minister, drew up a written narrative of the poisoning of Drusus, and then, rendered desperate by the loss of her children, destroyed herself. This new revelation of the perfidy of Sejanus—the only man whom Tiberius had ever, to all appearance, really trusted—brought out all the worst qualities in his nature, perhaps maddened him, for there was insanity in the Claudian family, and more than one of his ancestors had displayed the symptoms of a disturbed, as well as a depraved mind. But the mystery which shrouds the character of this emperor will probably never be completely solved; and it would far exceed the limits, as well as be foreign to the purpose of this volume, to discuss the inconsistencies patent in the portrait drawn of him by Tacitus. The difficulty of severing truth from falsehood, rumour from record, trustworthy statements from scandalous memorials of the time, is forcibly expressed in the following words of Niebuhr:—

"The difficulties which embarrass an historical narrative of times preceding that of the writer, were for those of Tacitus really insurmountable. Tiberius had succeeded, after Germanicus had quitted Germany, in reducing the world"—we suggest that Rome and Italy would be more correct—"to a state of torpid stillness, and in overspreading it with the silence of the grave. Its history is now confined to himself and his unfortunate house, to the destruction of the victims of his tyranny and the servitude of the senate. In this dreary silence we shudder, and speak in a whisper: all is dark and wrapt in mystery, doubtful and perplexing. Was Germanicus poisoned? Was Piso guilty? What urged him to his mad violence? Did the son of Tiberius die by poison,—Agrippina by the stroke of an assassin? All this was just as uncertain to Tacitus as to us."

And the doubts which hang over this reign increase when we turn from the pages of Tacitus to those of other writers, whether contemporaries of Tiberius or of a somewhat later period. In them we shall find that the admissions in his favor which the historian makes, reluctantly fall short of rather than exceed the truth. Those who were nearest to the time have generally treated the emperor with respect or indulgence.

Nor should it be forgotten, while admitting the darkness of the narrative, and trying in vain to reconcile the inconsistencies it presents, that among the materials employed by Tacitus in the composition of the 'Annals' were, by his own confession, the 'Memoirs' of the younger Agrippina, the unworthy daughter of Germanicus, the wife of the unfortunate Claudius, and

the mother of the execrable Nero. The authoress of these 'Memoirs' was not likely to be just, much less lenient, to the memory of Tiberius. Her mother, the virtuous and high-minded Agrippina—"a matron of the ancient stamp"—her two brothers, Drusus and Nero, had been sacrificed to the fears and jealousies of the Claudian Cæsar, who listened to the evil promptings of his minister Sejanus, and who was further incensed against the family of Drusus by the haughty bearing of the widow of Germanicus. The younger Agrippina had indeed wrongs to avenge; but the destruction of her near kindred was not her only motive for hostility to the name of Tiberius. Rumour had bruited abroad that her father Drusus was in heart a republican, and regarded even Augustus as a usurper. There was division in Cæsar's household. The loyal Germanicus, indeed, seems to have taken no part in it; but his wife, and the Drusi generally, viewed Tiberius as an interloper, and themselves, or at least the head of their family, as the only legitimate successors of Augustus. The hatred which the Plantagenets felt for the Tudors, the hatred which the Jacobites cherished against the house of Hanover, will afford us some measure of the feelings of the children of Drusus for the son of Livia. We no longer accept such writers as Heath and Sandford for our authorities in the case of Cromwell, nor trust Reginald Pole in forming our judgment of Henry VIII. A similar caution may fairly be exercised in the case of Tiberius, as he is exhibited by Tacitus; and, besides Agrippina's 'Memoirs,' Dean Merivale has been the first to turn attention to a very probable cause for the ill fame of Tiberius. He was, in some

things, an official pedant. The reports of criminal trials, even though they contain serious charges against himself, were carefully preserved in the public Record Office, "which thus became an official repository for every calumny against the emperor which floated on the impure surface of common conversation." There they probably remained unread until there came a time of zealous reaction against the Julian and Claudian Cæsars—the time, that is to say, of Trajan. "We cannot but suspect," continues the same great authority for 'Rome under the Cæsars,' "that this was the storehouse to which Tacitus and Suetonius, or the obscurer writers from whom they drew, resorted for the reputed details of a prince's habits whom it was the pleasure and interest of many parties to blacken to the utmost. The foulest stories current against Tiberius were probably the very charges advanced against him by libellers which he openly contradicted and denounced at the time, and which would have sunk into oblivion with the mass of contemporary slander, but for the restless and suicidal jealousy with which he himself registered and labelled them in the archives of indignant justice." *

"Velleius Paterculus, indeed, and Valerius Maximus," writes Dean Merivale, whose delineation of Tiberius is a corrective of that of Tacitus on many points—"contemporaries and subjects of that emperor, must be regarded as merely courtly panegyrists: but the adulation of the one, though it jars on ears accustomed to the dignified self-respect of the earlier Romans, is not more high-flown in language and sentiment than

* Chapter 44.

what our own writers have addressed to the Georges, and even the Charleses and Jameses, of the English monarchy; while that of the other is chiefly offensive from the connection in which it stands with the lessons of virtue and patriotism which his book was specially designed to illustrate. The elder Seneca, the master of a school of rhetoric, to which art his writings are devoted, makes no mention of the emperor under whom he wrote; but his son, better known as the statesman and philosopher, speaks of him with considerable moderation, and ascribes the worst of his deeds to Sejanus and the public informers (*delatores*) rather than to his own evil disposition. In the pages of Philo and Josephus the government of Tiberius is represented as mild and equitable: it is not until we come to Suetonius and Tacitus, in the third generation, that they are blazoned in the colours so painfully familiar to us." *

* Hist. of the Romans, v. ch. 46.

CHAPTER V.

THE 'ANNALS.'

CLAUDIUS—NERO.

CLAUDIUS, the younger brother of Germanicus, was in his fiftieth year when, after the murder of Caligula, he was unexpectedly raised to the throne. Tacitus cannot conceal his amazement that one hitherto so contemptible in the eyes of every class in Rome should have been reserved for the dignity of emperor. "Some strange caprice of fortune," he thinks, "turns all human wisdom to a jest. There was scarcely a man in Rome who did not seem, by the voice of fame and the wishes of the people, designed for the sovereign power, rather than the very person whom Fate cherished in obscurity in order to make him, at a future period, master of the Roman world." *

Yet Claudius, in intention, was not among the bad Cæsars. Had he met with honest friends, and had he not been misguided by his freedmen and his wives, Messalina and the younger Agrippina, his rule might have been happy for his subjects and creditable to himself. During a reign of fourteen years—41 to 54 A.D. —he made many good and useful regulations. He was

* Annals, iii. ch. 18.

diligent, nay laborious, in public business—indeed, sometimes too much so, since he would often interfere with matters which it would have been wiser to leave in the hands of the proper and less distinguished officials. By his activity he often incurred blame; and by his awkward manners and want of tact, ridicule also. Naturally a good-humoured man, he was frequently led into cruelty by bad advisers, and these advisers were his freedmen or the empresses.

The reign of Claudius has indeed often, and not improperly, been called "the reign of the Freedmen;" and as their ascendancy pervaded the times both of this Cæsar and his immediate successor, it may be well to give a slight sketch of them here.

That such a worshipper of times past, so stanch an aristocrat as Tacitus, dipped his pen in gall when delineating this order of men, is not to be wondered at. His dislike of these upstarts, as he accounted them, was, however, an echo of an old republican sentiment. Sulla's freedmen were, nearly as much as his proscriptions, the cause of the profound hatred with which the great Dictator was regarded by all except the highest aristocrats of Rome. The freedmen of Pompeius injured, by their pride and ostentation, the popularity of that general favorite of both senate and people. Yet without attempting to palliate the vices of a Polybius, a Pallas, or a Narcissus, it should be borne in mind that in a State which can scarcely be said to have possessed a middle class at the period treated of in the 'Annals'—the balancing influence of the knights as an intermediate power between the senate and the people was a thing of the past—the employment of freedmen in State affairs was almost a necessity of the time. The

nobles were too proud, when not too profligate, to be willing or wholesome counsellors of Cæsar: and even had they been better or more capable men than they were, he might have feared to draw them too near his person, inasmuch as the great families of Rome were never, at least under the Julian and Claudian emperors, Cæsar's well-wishers. Not until a *bourgeois* class of senators came in with the Flavian dynasty, was it easy to find, fit for high office, men of decent parentage or ordinary ability. The names of the freedmen show that if not Greeks by birth, they generally sprang from a Grecian stem. Unfortunately for both Cæsar and Rome, it was easy enough to meet with clever Greeks, but not with honest ones.

So long as he kept on good terms with the soldiers, an emperor had little to dread from the ambition of his freedmen, at least as regarded his own position. For neither a servile senate nor a well-fee'd prætorian cohort would have ventured to proclaim the emancipated son of a slave, Cæsar. Claudius gave scarcely more offence to the nobles by conferring on Gauls the full privileges of Roman citizens, than he did by permitting his freedman Polybius to walk in a procession between the two consuls. The odium incurred by royal favorites in modern times—the David Rizzios, the Buckinghams, and others—will enable us to form some idea of the feelings of Rome towards Pallas and Narcissus. The arrogance of these "new men" was on a par with their wealth. An anecdote by Tacitus shows their pride and opulence. A scion of the noble house of the Scipios did not blush to move for a vote of thanks in the senate to the freedman Pallas. "'Public thanks,' said this precious re-

presentative of the first and second Africanus, 'should be given to him, for that, being a descendant from the kings of Arcadia, he deigned to forget his ancient nobility, to accept service under the State, and to be numbered among the ministers of the prince.' Claudius gravely assured the conscript fathers that Pallas was satisfied with the honor, and would still live in his former poverty. Thus a decree of the senate was engraven on brass, in which an enfranchised slave, possessing about two millions four hundred thousand pounds, was loaded with commendations for his primitive parsimony!" *

And Claudius had even worse companions than Pallas or Narcissus—the women who intrigued with them, and traded on the weak nature of an uxorious prince. In his early days, when he was looked upon as only one degree removed from an idiot, he had always been confined within the palace walls; he had lived only with his wives — he had tried only to please them; and besides them, he had had no social intercourse, except with slaves and freedmen. Of his grandmother Livia, the wife of Augustus, he was always in terror. His ungainly figure, his thick and stammering utterance, his uncouth ways, his absence of mind, made him her abomination. He was successively the husband of the profligate Messalina and the imperious Agrippina, and each of them made him their tool. Such was the training, these were the companions, of the ill-starred brother of Germanicus.

And yet the Cæsar, whom thousands of his subjects

* Annals, xii. ch. 53.

fancied to be, what his grandmother had called him, a monster (*portentum hominis*), was the author of a measure that was not merely salutary at the time, but also tended materially to the preservation of the empire for many generations. In 48 A.D., the Ædui (Bourgogne) addressed a petition to Cæsar, praying him to grant to their chief magistrates admission into the senate of Rome, and to such offices as led to senatorial rank. The proposal was received with some murmurs by a proud oligarchy. But Claudius supported it in a speech, still preserved on a brazen table discovered three centuries ago at Lyons. The example then set was followed by similar concessions, and Claudius preceded Vespasian in calling up to the great council of Rome men of probity as well as substance, and in pouring new blood into the veins of a decaying assembly. Nor should we forget the great public works that were executed in this reign, and which would have done honor to a better age. The Claudian aqueduct was constructed in the grand antique style of the Etruscan architects, and supplied Rome with water throughout the middle ages. The emissary or canal which brought the water of the lake Fucinus into the river Liris, a design pronounced impracticable by Augustus, was constructed and completed by Claudius. For these public services he obtained but few thanks from his contemporaries; and the pen of the historian delineates his vices and his weaknesses only, and makes no mention of the better qualities of this unhappy Cæsar. There can be no doubt that his death was effected by poison administered to him by the last and worst of his wives, his own niece, Agrippina. Claudius she had cajoled or compelled to name

for his successor her son Nero, and to supersede his own son by another wife, Britannicus. Symptoms of repentance for this unnatural act appearing in her husband, she called to her aid a noted artist in poisoning named Locusta, and the administration of her drug "was intrusted to Halotus, one of the emperor's eunuchs, whose office it was to serve up the emperor's repasts, and prove the viands by tasting them."

"In fact," continues Tacitus, "all the particulars of this transaction were soon afterwards so thoroughly known, that the writers of the times are able to account how the poison was poured into a dish of mushrooms of which he was particularly fond; but whether it was that his senses were stupefied, or from the wine he had drunk, the effect of the poison was not immediately perceived. Agrippina was dismayed; and summoned to her assistance Zenophon, a physician, whom she had already involved in her nefarious schemes. It is believed that he, as if purposing to aid Claudius in his efforts to vomit, put down his throat an envenomed feather." * Whatever was done was effective; and Claudius, who all his lifetime was scarcely considered to be a man, was in a few days pronounced, by a decree of the senate, to be a god, and honoured with a pompous funeral.

With some precautions, for she was not sure that the Roman people would quietly submit to the disinheriting of Britannicus, Agrippina presented her son at first to the prætorians; and when, by the promise of a donation, their assent had been secured, a decree of the senate pronounced him emperor. There was no op-

* Annals, xii. ch. 67.

position on the part of the provinces, long accustomed to accept the choice of the capital. To rule in the name of her son was Agrippina's purpose; to him she left the pleasures, for herself she reserved the toils, of government. Under this arrangement things went on smoothly for a few years, and the "Quinquennium Neronis" became in after-times a common phrase for expressing a happy and well-ordered administration.

The young Cæsar enjoyed many advantages that had been denied to his predecessor. Claudius, who had a sincere relish for research, was permitted to pursue his own studies, and to write books, which have all perished, and which probably no one except himself ever read. But Nero had been carefully trained in his childhood, and there is reason to believe that his talents were naturally good, although his taste in poetry was, by unanimous consent of his contemporaries, abominable. He was an only, but not a spoilt child. His mother provided him with the best tutors she could find; and his studies were superintended by the foremost man of the age in literature, the philosopher Seneca. In one branch of learning he appears to have made little progress; and his incompetence was the more marked at the time, because ability to address an audience was an almost universal accomplishment in young Romans of rank. "Old men," says Tacitus, "who make it their recreation to compare the present and the past, took notice that Nero was the first Roman emperor who required the aid of another's eloquence." It may have been that Agrippina hoped the studies her son most delighted in—music and poetry—would always divert his attention from affairs of State, and leave herself and her favorites free to

deal with politics. In the forms and ceremonies of his high office, he was doubtless properly instructed; since, had he displayed ignorance of them, the Roman wits and scandal-mongers would not have failed to note it, and to make Rome merry at the mistakes of its Cæsar. In his "five good years" Nero indeed seems to have taken some part in business, and even to have exhibited generous instincts in his care for his people. Any dream, however, of an amiable character in Nero soon vanished; and his father's prophecy at his birth—that "his and Agrippina's offspring could be nothing but a monster"—was amply fulfilled.

We can afford space for only a very brief summary of the events in a reign of fifteen years. Peaceful years they were not, like those in general of Claudius. There were disturbances in Britain: the Parthians were again in the field, though they were humbled in the end, and their king Tiridates was compelled to acknowledge himself a vassal of the empire. He came to Rome: he had a magnificent reception there; and took his diadem from Nero's hand. But Corbulo, a faithful and conscientious as well as brave and successful general, was ill repaid for his victories. He anticipated by self-destruction the death Nero had prepared for him.

The fire which destroyed two-thirds of the city is scarcely less familiar to English readers than the great fire of London. The Golden Palace which Nero built on the ruins of Rome is also too famous for mention; and the so-called first persecution of the Christians adds to the interest of the period.

Nero's follies seem to have caused more indigna-

tion than his vices, and his vices to have been more resented than his crimes. The murder of his young brother (by adoption) Britannicus; of his miserable wife Octavia; of his mother Agrippina,—did not seriously incense a profligate nobility or a venal people, although the latter once rose in favour of the wife, but were frightened into apathy by brutal soldiers. In point of fact, the vices of the Cæsars were those of the upper classes of Rome generally, but, being exhibited on a larger stage, were the more observed, because, from his high and solitary station, the criminal was more conspicuous.

Once, indeed, in the year 65 A.D., it seemed as if the tyrant had at length exhausted the patience of his subjects, and that a spark still survived of the ancient spirit of Rome. The conspiracy of which Piso was the head, was formed; and had the members of it not wasted time in long delays, and had its nominal chief not been weak and vacillating, there was a fair prospect of success. The plot comprised some of the noblest and some of the most intelligent men of the time; among them the philosopher Seneca, and his nephew, the poet Lucan. The consummate art of the narration, in this case, adds to the perception of our loss in the absence of Tacitus's account of the far more complex and more widely ramified conspiracy of Sejanus.

In the combination of Piso and his associates against Nero we come for the first time on the appearance of philosophers in connection with public affairs; and as Stoics especially were destined to take some prominent share in the administration of the empire, or in the imperial Council of State, nay, in the person of Marcus Au-

relius to occupy the throne itself, it may be pertinent to the subject to show what view Tacitus took of men who mingled speculative with active pursuits. Two sects of philosophers of any moment prevailed at Rome either in the time of Nero or the historian—the Stoic and Epicurean. But the latter of these so rarely appear in the 'Annals' that they may be passed over. It was otherwise with the members of the Stoic school. If not really formidable, they were the cause of great anxiety to the Cæsars. Tacitus informs us of the interest taken by the capital, and in many of the provinces also, as to all that the Stoic Thrasea—with whose last words this portion of his works closes—was saying or doing. The journals of the day were read in all parts of the empire in order to learn what Thrasea approved or condemned. It was found that he avoided the ceremony of renewing the oath of allegiance to the Cæsar—in this case Nero—at the beginning of each year. Although one of the quindecemviral priesthood, he was never known to offer vows to the gods for the preservation of the prince. He declined to pray for his heavenly voice, as others did; and as the imperial voice was husky, it was the more disloyal in him not to petition the deities to vouchsafe it clearness. The Stoics were much given to suicide, and in their lectures and writings commended the practice of it. And so it was difficult to deal with people who, holding their own lives cheap, might be supposed to have little respect for the lives of others.

Tacitus did not hold in much esteem the doctrines of the Porch, and doubted the fitness of speculative dreamers for statesmen. Had Seneca shown himself a good adviser for his imperial pupil? Had not the

pupil compelled the tutor to consent to or justify deeds which disgraced them both? Had he lifted up his voice when Britannicus was foully murdered? Had he not composed the speech by which the son extenuated the still more atrocious murder of his mother? Some of these followers of Zeno he knew to be arrant knaves — hired witnesses, unscrupulous informers, hypocrites who preached virtue and practised vice under the shelter of an unkempt beard and a ragged gown. Even such as he respected he often blames for their want of common-sense. Their protests and struggles against Cæsarianism served for little else than to make it more oppressive. The rumour of a conspiracy increased a Cæsar's fears: its failure, his cruelty. The tendency of philosophers to suicide—and in readiness to poison or stab himself the Epicurean was not behind the Stoic—Tacitus thought a symptom of impatience or moral cowardice, rather than of true manliness or patriotism. When so few people were good and so many evil, why should the former hang themselves and the latter flourish like green bay-trees?

Many of the numerous anecdotes with which Tacitus enlivens his 'Annals' are, taken in connection with the more important events of the time, key-notes to Cæsarian history. The following words, addressed to Nero by a rough honest soldier, who had been engaged in Piso's conspiracy, may suffice for one among the many examples that might be given. "Asked by the emperor, what could induce him to forget the solemn obligation of his military oath, Subrius Flavius replied, 'There was a time when no soldier in your army was more devoted than I was to your service,

and that as long as you deserved the esteem of mankind. I began to hate you when you were guilty of parricide: when you murdered your mother, and destroyed your wife: when you became a charioteer, and an incendiary.'"* It is evident from this strange juxtaposition of folly with crime that Nero's degradation of his high office weighed in public opinion fully as much as any of the darker deeds which have rendered his name infamous for ever.

The reader's attention is now called to passages in the 'Annals' which may fairly be denominated Episodical, and in which their author displays his masterly skill as a painter in words. He avails himself of every opportunity for such digressions. Weary, apparently, of the crimes, the follies, the caprices, and prodigality of the Cæsars and the capital, he gladly leaves Rome and Italy for a while behind him, and welcomes a change of scene, even as the traveller in a thirsty land welcomes the green spots and the water-springs which relieve the tediousness of his way.

"Whenever Tacitus indulges himself in those beautiful episodes, in which he relates some domestic transactions of the Germans or the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform scene of vice and misery."† So wrote one who had deeply studied the works of the historian, and who followed the example he commends in many of his own most interesting chapters.

The reign of Tiberius, for example, although it lasted for twenty-three years, is far from rich in events, and,

* Annals, xv. ch. 67.

† Gibbon—Decline and Fall, ch. viii.

without episodical digressions, is little more than a narrative of the contest between the emperor, the Julian family, and the senate. Tiberius, after Germanicus was recalled from the Rhine, succeeded in reducing the Roman world to a state of general acquiescence in his rule. The provinces, to all appearance, and indeed according to the account given of them by other writers, enjoyed the benefits of a general peace; and had every reason to be content with a Cæsar who did not oppress them by capricious or over-burdensome taxation, and who, by allowing both imperial and senatorial governors to remain long, and sometimes even for life, in office, delivered them from the harpies sent out at least triennally by the commonwealth. One great offence, in Tacitus's opinion, committed by Tiberius, was his politic neglect of minor disturbances abroad. He would not expend the forces of the empire upon petty wars in Africa or Gaul. He forbore to interfere with them in person: he let them either die out by exhaustion of the rebels themselves, or left them to be extinguished by his ordinary representatives, prætorian or proconsular. Tacitus, who wrote the 'History' and 'Annals' under the warlike Trajan—who not only put down revolt with his own hand, but considerably extended the boundaries of the empire—condemned the policy of Tiberius as either a culpable neglect or an inglorious timidity. But in his Dacian war, Trajan humbled an enemy who, in a few years more, might have imperilled Rome itself; and in his eastern campaigns taught the Parthians a lesson which they remembered until again invited to active measures by the decrepitude and decline of the empire itself.

Very early in the 'Annals' we are introduced to the

rivals of Rome on its eastern frontier. Armenia was a constant bone of contention between the Roman and the Parthian monarch. It had been so when consuls ruled the State; it was so under Augustus; and it was the ambition and the pride of both the eastern and the western emperor to place on the Armenian throne a sovereign willing to be guided by them respectively. In A.D. 16, and before the Rhenish campaigns of Germanicus were finished, the oriental kingdoms, and consequently the Roman provinces adjacent to them, were thrown into commotion. The flame of discord was lighted up by the Parthians. Weary of civil broils and a disputed succession to the throne, that restless people had sued for a king at the hands of Rome, and not long after accepting, grew tired of him. Vonones, whom the Cæsar had sent them, was at first received with all demonstrations of joy. But his subjects soon began to despise him as a prince, whose education at Rome had rendered him unfit for an eastern crown. In his tastes and pursuits he was essentially a foreigner. He took no delight in horsemanship—and to be a fearless rider was, among the Parthians, one of the most indispensable of royal virtues. Not being an expert and fearless horseman, Vonones naturally disliked the sports of the chase—and this was another cause of grave offence to his people. When he made a progress in his kingdom, he did not witch the world with noble horsemanship, but lolled lazily in a litter, like some effeminate western despot. Next, the rude fare of the Parthians was not to his taste: he introduced new-fangled Italian dishes, and thus vexed the souls of his caterers and cooks. The Romans were particular in sealing up their wine-casks: and Vonones looked

sharp after his cellar. This conduct was thought abominable in a crowned head, and excited the ridicule and contempt of his butlers and his people. Again, since the days of the great Cyrus, it had ever been the practice of oriental potentates to show themselves sparingly to their subjects, and even to their courtiers and ministers to be difficult of access; whereas Vonones was affable to all comers, and practised at Seleucia the courtesy which he had seen Augustus display at Rome. "Virtues," says Tacitus, "new to the Parthians were new vices. Between his good and evil qualities no distinction was made: they were foreign manners, and for that reason detested." The unlucky Vonones was in a very similar position to that of our George I. and George II., whose preference for Hanoverian ways and dishes, whose undisguised yearning for their palace at Herrenhausen and its stiff and punctilious ceremonies, and whose equally manifest distaste for English cookery, rendered them very unpopular with the nation that had not very willingly invited them to the throne.

Not, however, until Nero's reign, and shortly after his accession, do the Parthian wars occupy a prominent space in the 'Annals.' Cn. Domitius Corbulo was a soldier of the ancient stamp—one "fit to stand by Cæsar and give direction." He had highly distinguished himself under Claudius in a war against a German tribe, the Chauci, and by the excellent discipline he maintained in his army—not a universal merit at the time in Roman generals, as appears in several chapters of the 'History.' In the year 54 A.D., the Parthian king, Vologeses, invaded Armenia and expelled its king, Rhadamistus, who was under the pro-

tection of the Roman Cæsar. The war, with sundry intervals of truce, lasted for nine years, but, in despite of much thwarting by Nero or his advisers, Corbulo was uniformly successful, and secured and strengthened the eastern frontier for several years to come. "Corbulo," says Tacitus, "was in high favour with the princes of the east." He possessed many qualities attractive to oriental minds. His stature was manly, his personal dignity remarkable: his discourse magnificent—that is, having something of Asiatic pomp: his movements in the field were rapid: his combinations excited the wonder and applause of his opponents—even in their eyes he was a hero: "he united," says the historian, "with experience and consummate wisdom, those exterior accomplishments, which, though in themselves of no real value, give an air of elegance even to trifles."

The well-trained legions which Corbulo commanded in Germany did not accompany him to Armenia. There he had to construct an army before he could venture on active operations in the field:—

"He had to struggle with the slothful disposition of his legionaries more than with the perfidy of his enemies; for the legions brought out of Syria, enervated by a long peace, bore with much impatience the duties of Roman soldiers. It fully appeared that in that army there were veterans who never mounted guard, never stood sentry—men who gazed at a palisade and foss as things strange and wonderful—without helmets or breastplates — coxcombs, and only looking after gain, having served their whole time in different towns. Having, therefore, discharged such as were unfit from sickness or age, he sought to recruit his

forces; and levies were made through Cappadocia and Galatia, and a legion from Germany was added. The whole army, too, was kept in tents; though such was the rigour of the winter, that the earth, which was covered with ice, would not, without digging, afford a place for their tents. Many had their limbs shrivelled up by the intense cold; and some, as they stood sentry, were frozen to death. One soldier was particularly remarked, whose hands, as he carried a bundle of wood, mortified so suddenly that, still clasping the burden, they dropped from his mutilated arms. The general himself, thinly clad, his head bare, when the troops were assembled, when employed in their works, was incessantly among them, commending the stout-hearted, comforting the feeble, and exhibiting an example to all. Shrinking from the hardship of the climate and the service, many at first deserted; but desertion was in all cases punished with death. Nor did Corbulo, as in other armies, treat with indulgence a first or second offence. That course experience proved to be salutary and preferable to mercy, inasmuch as there were fewer desertions from that camp than from those in which lenity was employed."

The result of such extreme severity shows not merely the ability of the commander, but also the sterling worth of the Roman soldier, who submitted to the conversion of a slothful into an active force, and while he suffered under it recognised the wisdom of such discipline. In reforming troops whom other generals had spoiled by indulgence, Corbulo followed the wholesome example of the conqueror of Carthage, the younger Scipio Africanus, who reorganised a

Numantia a lax and disorderly army; and that of Caius Marius, who, like our Wellington in Portugal, prohibited his men from fighting until he was satisfied that they were soldiers indeed.

The pride of the Roman people had rarely been more deeply gratified than when the news arrived that the Armenian king, Tiridates, had surrendered to Corbulo, and had laid down his diadem at the foot of Nero's statue, in the camp of his conqueror and in the presence of his own nobles. The homage was the more signal and complete because Tiridates was a brother of the Parthian monarch, and had been placed by him on the Armenian throne. A few days before, Corbulo and Tiridates had an interview in the tent of the latter, and the ceremony then observed was not unlike that which now takes place when a governor-general of India receives a native prince. The Parthian and the Roman general, each attended by twenty mounted officers, met on ground now occupied by the legions, but recently the scene of a defeat on their part. As soon as they drew near to each other, Tiridates leapt from his horse, and Corbulo returned the compliment. They then advanced on foot, and took each other by the hand. The pride of the Barbarians was flattered by the recollection of their late victory on the spot; while the triumph of Corbulo was rendered complete by the proposal of the Armenian king to accept his crown from the Cæsar's hand in Rome itself. The conference ended with an embrace.

"Then," proceeds the historian, "after an interval of a few days, the two armies met with much pomp and circumstance on both sides: there stood the Parthian horse, ranged in troops with the standards of

their several nations: here were posted the battalions of the legions, their eagles glittering, their ensigns displayed, with the images of their gods, and forming a kind of temple. A tribunal placed in the centre supported a chair of state, on which the statue of Nero rested. Tiridates approached, and having immolated the victims in due form, he lifted the diadem from his head and laid it at the foot of the statue. Every heart throbbed with intense emotion."

Tiridates seems to have been more struck by the manners of the Romans than by their military array. Perhaps to a monarch accustomed to see myriads of horsemen in their bright chain-mail, the compact camp and the scanty cavalry of his opponents might appear comparatively poor and mean. We are told that—

"To the splendour of renown—for he was held in high esteem by the easterns—Corbulo added the graces of courtesy and the pleasures of the banquet: during which the king, as often as he observed any usage which was new to him, was frequent in his inquiries what it might mean—as that a centurion advertised the general when the watch was first set, and the company at the banquet broke up at the sound of a trumpet. Why was the fuel on the augural altar kindled by a torch? All which, Corbulo explaining in a strain of exaggeration, inspired Tiridates with admiration of the ancient institutions of the Romans."

Occasionally Tacitus indulges in what we may fairly term a romantic story. Rhadamistus, an Iberian prince, had usurped the Armenian throne, but was expelled from it by the Tiridates just mentioned, and compelled to fly for his life. "He escaped with his wife, and both owed their lives to the speed of their

horses. She was far advanced in pregnancy, yet from dread of the enemy, and tenderness for her husband, she bore up at first as well as she could under the fatigue of the flight. Compelled, however, to yield to her condition, she implored him to save her by an honorable death from the reproach and misery of captivity. At first he embraced, he comforted and cheered her; now admiring her heroic spirit, now faint with dread that, if left behind, she might fall into the hands of another. At last, from excess of love, and his own familiarity with deeds of horror, he bared his scimitar, and wounding her, drew her to the banks of the Araxes, where he committed her to the stream. He himself fled with headlong speed till he reached Iberia. Zenobia, meanwhile (for such was her name), was descried by shepherds floating on the water, still breathing, and with manifest signs of life; and as they gathered from the dignity of her aspect that she was of no mean rank, they bound up her wound and applied their rustic medicines to it; and when they had learnt her name and adventures, they conveyed her to Artaxata, whence, at the public charge, she was conducted to Tiridates, who received her courteously, and treated her with the respect due to royalty." *

This story of Zenobia in no way affects the fortunes of the empire. It throws no light on the policy or character of the Cæsars, but it affords the writer an opportunity for displaying the deep interest he took in the sorrows and sufferings of humankind.

He does not disdain to interrupt his narrative when

* Annals, xii. ch. 51.

that "miraculous bird the phœnix, after disappearing for a series of ages, revisited Egypt in the year 34 A.D." He thinks "the fact worthy of notice, and that it will not be unwelcome to the reader."

"That the phœnix is sacred to the sun, and differs from the rest of the feathered species in the form of its head, and the tincture of its plumage, are points settled by naturalists. Of its longevity the accounts are various. The common persuasion is, that it lives five hundred years, though by some writers the period is extended to fourteen hundred and sixty-one. . . . It is the disposition of the phœnix, when its course of years is finished, and the approach of death is felt, to build a nest in its native clime, and there deposit the principles of life, from which a new progeny arises. The first care of the young bird, as soon as fledged and able to trust to its wings, is to perform the obsequies of its father. But this duty is not undertaken rashly. He collects a quantity of myrrh, and, to try its strength, makes frequent excursions with a load on its back. When he has made this experiment through a long tract of air and gained confidence in his own vigour, he takes up the body of his father, and flies with it to the altar of the sun, where he leaves it to be consumed in flames of fragrance. Such is the account of this extraordinary bird. It has, no doubt, a mixture of fable; but that the phœnix, from time to time, appears in Egypt, seems to be a fact sufficiently ascertained."*

We pass on to the 'History.' Inferior to them in some respects, and far more imperfect than the 'Annals,'

* Annals, vi. ch. 28.

the earlier-written work rests on better authority than the later. The 'History,' indeed, is a narrative akin to that of Livy and Roman historians in general; whereas the 'Annals' are conceived in a modern spirit, and are the model on which many subsequent writers have constructed their works.

CHAPTER VI.

'HISTORY.'

GALBA—OTHO.

WHETHER the year 51 or 54 A.D. be accepted as the birth-year of Tacitus, he was old enough, in either case, to have been able to watch and to retain a lively recollection of the great convulsion of the empire which followed Nero's death. If born in the later of these years he was nearly sixteen, if in the earlier he was nearly eighteen: and with the sixteenth year commenced the manhood of a Roman; and at eighteen we have already seen that Pliny had put on a lawyer's gown. The 'History' may accordingly be accounted the work of one having good opportunities for observation himself, and for making inquiry from others.

The 'History,' when perfect, extended from the arrival of Galba in Rome, on the 1st of January, 69 A.D., to the murder of Domitian in 96. If the books which are unfortunately lost bore any proportion to those extant, then we may fairly put down the number of them as thirty at the least. Unfortunately we possess only four books and the beginning of the fifth, and these comprise, and that not entirely, the events of those troubled years 69 and 70. The second chapter is a

prologue to a tragic drama of the deepest dye, and prepares us for scenes of crime and calamity following one another in rapid succession.

"I am entering," writes Tacitus, "on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in its wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors. Four emperors perished by the sword. There were three civil wars: there were more with foreign enemies: there were often wars that had both characters at once. Now, too, Italy was prostrated by disasters either entirely novel, or that recurred only after a long succession of ages. Cities in Campania's richest plains were swallowed up and overwhelmed—Rome wasted by conflagrations, its oldest temples consumed, and the Capitol itself fired by the hands of citizens. Never, surely, did more terrible calamities of the Roman people, or evidence more conclusive, prove that the gods take no thought for our happiness, but only for our punishment."

In the election of a Cæsar the senate might affect to confirm the choice of the soldiers; but it was the soldiers, or at least the terror of them, who really invested with the purple robe Servius Galba. He was chosen by the Spanish legions, to whom the example had been set by those of Gaul, who had put forward as Nero's successor Vindex and Virginius Rufus. The one perished in the attempt to become Cæsar; the other, with courageous moderation, refused to be placed on that proud but perilous eminence. In their selection of Galba the soldiers to all appearance did wisely and well, for he had passed through many grades of both military and civil offices with much credit to himself. He reigned long enough and unfortunately enough to

merit the description—it has become almost proverbial—that had he never been emperor no one would have doubted his capacity for empire.

He came to the throne under almost every possible disadvantage. He was old, he was ugly, bald-headed, and a gouty invalid. He kept his purse-strings tight: he spoke his mind indiscreetly: he was a slave to his freedmen and favourites: good in intention, he was infirm of purpose: a popular and humane provincial governor, he caused much blood to be spilt in Rome, not because he was cruel, but through weakness, indecision, or mere perplexity.

He came to a city peopled by his foes. The prætorians could not stomach a Cæsar chosen by the legions: they could not conceal from themselves that the fatal secret was revealed, and indeed was pervading the provinces—that a "prince might be created elsewhere than at Rome." Highly had Nero favored—nay, even flattered—his body-guards. They were the props of his throne: their tribunes, and even their centurions, were admitted to his orgies: they stood beside him in the courts of justice: they accompanied him on his journeys: he enriched them, when his own coffers were empty, with the spoils of noble houses: he relaxed their discipline: he catered for their pleasures: they led the applause when he drove his chariot in the circus, or sang and spouted in the theatre. And now a Cæsar was in their darling's place who knew not the prætorians—who had filled the capital with the ordinary legionaries, whom they had always affected to despise as the "Line." The treasury was known to be empty: the Cæsar was said to be avaricious. "He loved no plays;" he was not musical;

nothing was to be expected, much to be dreaded from, this septuagenarian and worn-out martinet.

The populace were not less hostile to Galba. Next to the prætorians, they were the late emperor's warmest supporters. He was ever giving them good dinners and shows and spectacles: he did not keep himself shut up in the recesses of the palace: his hand was heavy on the senators, and the senators they hated: but he was the king of the people; and, being so, what mattered it to them if he had put to death his adoptive brother Britannicus, or that termagant his mother Agrippina, even if she were a daughter of their once much-loved Germanicus?

Nero's freedmen, again, were among Galba's foes. They indeed had been making hay while the sun shone; they had "soaked up the Cæsar's countenance, his rewards, his authorities." Now evil days had come: inquiries were being made into the modes by which they had become rich—demands were being issued for restitution of their gains. Galba needed what they had gleaned; and it was "but squeezing them and, sponges, you will be dry again." The inquiries and demands were alike vain, for the sponges were already dry; they had squandered abroad all that they had nefariously gotten. If Galba had any friends, they were in his own army, or in the senate. But, by an indiscreet though honest declaration that he was wont to "choose his soldiers, not to buy them," he had also disappointed and estranged his own partisans. To rely on the senate was to lean on a broken reed. The senatorial chiefs were none of them men of bold aspirations or vigorous resolutions.

Ill luck dogged the heels of Galba even before he

reached Italy. The prefect of the prætorians, Nymphidius Sabinus, who had taken an active part in Nero's overthrow, had met his successor at Narbonne (Narbo), and, with many compliments, tendered him allegiance, accompanied with a modest request to have one of the highest offices in the State conferred on himself. The ground, however, was preoccupied by Galba's adherents, who, not unnaturally, claimed place and priority in his favors. The prefect, deeply offended by such refusal, hurried back to Rome, and tried to persuade the body-guard to proclaim him, Cæsar. This was too strong a measure even for the dissatisfied soldiery, and Nymphidius was slaughtered in the prætorian camp. But Galba, or his counsellors, pushed success too far by demanding the sacrifice of all Nymphidius's supporters who had not already destroyed themselves, and by putting to death a man of consular rank, Petronius Turpilianus, whom Nero had appointed to the command of his guards, and who was now condemned without even the formality of a trial. Such informal execution of "persons of quality" would have touched lightly an army or a populace already familiar with irregular sentences and short shrift. But Galba increased his evil repute as a man of blood when, on arriving at the Milvian Bridge in Rome, he ordered his soldiers to mow down Nero's marine battalions—they had troubled him with premature importunities—and over whose killed and wounded bodies he entered the capital.

Galba was not ambitious of empire. He had refused to accept the throne when offered him by the army on the death of Caligula; he had served Claudius faithfully as governor of Africa. The already aged veteran

was prudently living in retirement, when Nero appointed him to be his legate in Spain, and for eight years he governed that province with great ability. But he was in the hands of evil ministers, and resigned himself entirely to them, and these ministers were at variance with one another: on one point alone did they agree —that at Galba's age some provision ought to be promptly made for a successor. But their harmony extended only to the general principle that Galba could not live much longer, and that there was already a formidable rival in the field.

We not unfrequently meet with persons in history whose characters it is scarcely possible to draw correctly—persons who disappoint our hopes, and exceed our expectations of them. Of this class of men was Marcus Salvius Otho. Among the most profligate of Nero's companions, the Rochester of his court, he governed the province of Lusitania for several years with much credit to himself: the most luxurious and depraved of men while prosperous, his end was that of a hardy though unfortunate soldier. Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it—he died by his own hand, an Epicurean Cato: even as Rochester, if Bishop Burnet may be trusted, departed a good Christian. It is, however, to Galba's credit that he declined following the interested advice of his ministers in the appointment of a successor. "He was actuated," Tacitus thinks, "by concern for the State, and saw that the sovereign power was wrested out of Nero's hands in vain, if it were to be transferred to Otho—a duplicate of him. In the choice of a colleague Galba appears for once to have judged for himself; and his selection, though it proved unfor-

tunate, cannot justly be found fault with. Piso Licinianus came of an illustrious family on both sides. By the better sort in Rome he was respected, if not beloved; but his aspect and deportment savoured too much of the strictness of a primitive age. By the profligate and the frivolous he was called morose and sullen. This appointment necessarily crushed the hopes and aroused the wrath of Otho, who now began to intrigue in earnest against Galba.

All this time a storm was brewing in the north far more dangerous to the emperor, and far more disastrous to Rome and Italy, than Otho's plot. The very day on which Galba put on the consular robe—January 1, 69 A.D.—the legions of Upper Germany, when summoned to take the military oath to that emperor, tore down his images, demanded that the oath should run in the name of the senate and people, and that some other successor to Nero should be appointed. Aulus Vitellius had recently been sent by Galba as consular legate to Lower Germany, and on the very next day after this mutiny broke out, he was greeted in the camp at Cologne by the legions of Germany, or their delegates, as Imperator.

The news of this movement in Germany hurried on the adoption. It was conferred with dignity by Galba, it was received with becoming modesty and reverence by Piso, and with plausible and perhaps sincere expressions of his desire to fulfil the important duties imposed on him. Galba conducted him to the prætorian camp, but as he did not promise a donative, his speech to the soldiers aggravated his former unpopularity. The way was now prepared for Otho. To the disappointed guards a notorious prodigal was

far more welcome than a frugal emperor. On the morning of the 15th of January, Galba was present at a sacrifice, and Otho in attendance on him. The entrails of the victims betokened risk to the emperor —"in his own household there lurked a foe." That foe, it had been prearranged, was summoned by a freedman to keep an appointment with a surveyor of works. With this excuse he quitted the emperor's presence and hurried to the place of tryst already agreed on—the Golden Milestone beneath the Capitol in front of the Roman Forum. It may have been by chance, it may have been by design, to prevent premature alarm in the city, that only three-and-twenty common soldiers there saluted Otho as "emperor." Certainly he had expected more, since, dismayed at the thin attendance, he seems for a moment to have wavered in his purpose. But his partisans, better informed, drew their swords, thrust him into a litter, and bore him off to the prætorian camp.

Arrived at the camp, the commander on that day—one Julius Martialis, a tribune—it is uncertain whether he were an accomplice, or merely alarmed at so unlooked-for a visit—opened the gates, and admitted the pretender into the enclosure. There the other tribunes and centurions, regarding their own safety alone, and perhaps sharing in the delusion of Martialis—that this feeble body of traitors to Galba was but an advanced guard of numerous and powerful conspirators—forgot at once their duty and their military oath, and joined in, or at least connived at, an enterprise of whose aim they were still uncertain, and of the existence of which they had been ignorant a few minutes before. In fact, the privates alone seem to have been in

the secret; but, as had often happened, and was often to happen again, they were too powerful for their officers. The condensed phrase of the historian alone conveys the pith and marrow of the plot. "Two common soldiers" (*mānipulares*) "engaged to transfer the empire of the Roman people — and they *did* transfer it."

Otho meanwhile had bought the imperial guards. He attended at Galba's supper-table, gave handsome presents to the cohort on duty, and consoled the disappointed among the soldiers with gifts of land or money. The unconscious emperor, busy with his sacrifice, was really importuning the gods of an empire that was now another's. Piso harangued the troops: but the appeal of a stoical Cæsar was addressed to deaf ears: the greater number of his hearers at once dispersed; the few who remained faithful to the two Cæsars were feeble or wavering; the populace and the slaves clamoured with discordant shouts for Otho's death and the destruction of the conspirators. But what could a few domestic servants, a few frightened knights and senators, and an unarmed rabble, do against the prætorians, now advancing on the city? It was to little purpose that Galba's friends stood by him when he himself was undecided, when his ministers were wrangling with each other, and when every moment brought the conspirators nearer. The murder of Galba can only be described in the words of Tacitus —at least in those of his ablest English translators.*

"Galba was hurried to and fro with every movement of the surging crowd;" the feeble old man, attended

* Church and Brodribb.

by only one half-armed cohort, had come down from the Palatine hill to the Forum; "the halls and temples all around were thronged with spectators of this mournful sight. Not a voice was heard from the better class of people or even from the rabble. Everywhere were terror-stricken countenances, and ears turned to catch every sound. It was a scene neither of agitation nor of repose, but there reigned the silence of profound alarm and profound indignation. Otho, however, was told that they were arming the mob. He ordered his men to hurry on at full speed and to anticipate the danger. Then did Roman soldiers rush forward like men who had to drive a Vologeses or Pacorus from the ancestral throne of the Arsacidæ, not as though they were hastening to murder their aged and defenceless emperor. In all the terror of their arms, and at the full speed of their horses, they burst into the Forum, thrusting aside the crowd and trampling on the senate. Neither the sight of the Capitol, nor the sanctity of the overhanging temples, could deter them from committing a crime which any one succeeding to power must avenge."

"When this armed array was seen to approach, the standard-bearer of the cohort that escorted Galba tore off and dashed upon the ground Galba's effigy. At this signal the feeling of all the troops declared itself plainly for Otho. The Forum was deserted by the flying populace. Weapons were pointed against all who hesitated. Near the lake of Curtius, Galba was thrown out of his litter and fell to the ground, through the alarm of his bearers. His last words have been variously reported, according as men hated or admired him. Some have said that he asked in a tone of en-

treaty what wrong he had done, and begged a few days for the payment of the donative. The more general account is, that he voluntarily offered his neck to the murderers, and bade them haste and strike, if it seemed to be for the good of the commonwealth. To those who slew him it mattered not what he said. About the actual murderer nothing is clearly known. The soldiers foully mutilated his arms and legs, for his breast was protected, and in their savage ferocity inflicted many wounds even on the headless trunk."

It will not be necessary to dwell long on the remainder of Otho's story, since he did little memorable during his short reign until the last moments of his life. "Uneasy lay the head that wore the crown." The last rites to Galba were scarcely paid; the acclamations that greeted Otho both in the senate and the camp were still ringing in all ears, when he found that he had reason to tremble. "From the moment," says Dean Merivale, "that he stepped through an emperor's blood into the palace of the Cæsars, Otho was made aware that he in his turn must fight if he would retain his newly acquired honours." In swift succession, messengers followed one another, bringing him tidings of the progress of sedition in Gaul, and of the formidable attitude assumed by Vitellius at the head of the armies on the Rhine.

And who was this third candidate for the purple? Had it been worth while to murder Galba in order that Otho might succeed? Would it be worth the expense of more blood and treasure to despatch Otho, and replace him by a rival of whom no good report had ever reached the capital? Dear as Nero by his vices and cruelties had cost the senate and the people, and one

or two of the provinces, yet at present the empire appeared to have lost rather than gained by his removal. It was bad for a score or two of statesmen and generals to perish yearly by the executioner's hands, or by suicide —that common refuge of despair; but it was worse for thousands to be mown down by the swords of infuriated soldiers, in a few weeks or even a few days. Aulus Vitellius, indeed, was not utterly evil. He was not wholly abandoned to the vices and pleasures of the city. He had gained for himself some reputation in letters and in eloquence; he had served with great credit for uprightness as proconsul and legate in Africa. On his march from the Rhine he displayed some generosity in saving unpopular officers from the fury of the legions, among them Virginius Rufus; and some modesty in at first deferring to accept the title of Augustus, and positively refusing that of Cæsar. His mother and his wife also helped to invest him with some vicarious merit. Both these matrons were examples of moderation in prosperity. Sextilia, like Cromwell's mother, looked with fear and distrust on her son's elevation, refused all public honours herself, and replied to the first letter he addressed to her under his new title of Germanicus, that *her* son was named Vitellius, and she knew of no other. This high-minded woman died shortly after his accession, seems to have been spared the spectacle of his gross and vulgar excesses, and certainly did not witness his shameful end. His wife Galeria bore herself as the spouse of a simple senator, and humanely protected the children of Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, from the daggers of the Vitellians. Like Galba, too, Vitellius committed no crime in aspiring to the throne; it was

forced upon him by the tribunes and centurions at Cologne.

It is pleasant to encounter virtuous women in the annals of a period soiled by the names of a Poppæa, a Messalina, and an Agrippina; we have therefore given a passing notice of the wife and mother of Vitellius. Of himself there is nothing more to be said on the score of virtue. "Tacitus," says Gibbon, "fairly calls him a hog," and in truth he was a most valiant trencherman. As soon as, perhaps even before, his arrangements were completed for despatching his legions from the Rhine to the Tiber, he appears to have thought that the highest privilege he had attained by his sudden promotion was that of keeping the most expensive table ever known in Roman annals. But Vitellius allowed not a day to pass unsignalised by the pomp and circumstance of his dinner. During his whole progress from Cologne to Italy—it was necessarily a slow one, since he needed many hours for refreshment and digestion—the lands through which he passed were ransacked, the rivers and the seas were swept, for delicacies for his table. "The leading men of the various States were ruined by having to furnish his entertainments, and the States themselves reduced to beggary." Such a commander could neither be respected nor enforce discipline. The Gauls suffered severely, but not so much as Italy, from the presence of the Vitellians. The evils of war are terrible, but not so terrible, says the historian, as was the march of the German legions. "The soldiers, dispersed through the municipal towns and colonies, were robbing and plundering and polluting every place with violence and lust. Everything,

lawful or unlawful, they were ready to seize or to sell, sparing nothing, sacred or profane. Some persons under the soldiers' garb murdered their private enemies. The soldiers themselves, who knew the country well, marked out rich estates and wealthy owners for plunder, or for death in case of resistance; their commanders were in their power, and dared not check them."

Otho did not answer the expectations of his partisans in Rome. He was no longer the Otho of the Neronian time. He deferred his pleasures to a more convenient season: he moulded his new life to accord with the duties and dignity of his new position. Yet he got little credit by the change, for men not unnaturally thought that his virtues were a mask for the moment, and that, if he returned victorious, his vices would revive. Perhaps they were wrong in their apprehensions. No indolence or riot disgraced Otho's march. "He wore a cuirass of iron, and was to be seen in front of the standards, on foot, rough and negligent in dress, and utterly unlike what common report had pictured him." In a few preliminary skirmishes the fortunes of the Othonian and Vitellian armies were pretty evenly balanced. But the emperor had hurried into the field with very insufficient forces; he seems, indeed, from the first to have despaired of the issue. His excesses in early life had enfeebled, not his courage, but his power of will. He had indecently exulted when the head of Piso was shown to him, but the spectre of Galba is said to have haunted him in the solitude of the night after the murder. Within twenty hours after his usurpation, he began to presage his own fall. In one thing

he did not share the vices of Nero; he thirsted not for blood, for those whom he put to death were victims to the wrath of the prætorians or of the populace.

And so, indifferent to life and desponding of success, Otho went forth to do battle for his throne without awaiting the legions which had declared for him in Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Mæsia. The prætorian guards were the kernel of his forces, but they were more than overmatched by the Vitellian legions trained in the German wars. The guards were indeed corrupted by the luxuries of Rome, and regardless of discipline. Like many French regiments in 1870, they elected their own officers, and obeyed or disobeyed them as they pleased. Spies, too, from the camp of the Vitellians, had found their way into Rome, and whispered to many who resented Galba's murder, that if his destroyer were slain or deposed, there would be another donative from his conqueror.

The battle which decided Otho's fate was fought at Bedriacum, a small town or hamlet situated between Verona and Cremona. At first fortune seemed to smile on the Othonians; a successful charge on their part broke the enemy's line, and one of his eagles was taken by them. But this, so far from discouraging, infuriated the Vitellians, and determined victory in their favour. Cæcina and Valens, their commanders, proved themselves valiant and able officers, whereas Otho's generals early quitted the field. The slaughter was dreadful. "In civil wars," says Tacitus, "no prisoners are reserved for sale." The Vitellians were not merely better led and disciplined, but their reserves were large, and any chance of retrieving defeat by a second combat was made vain by the insubordination of the vanquished,

who laid all the blame of discomfiture on their commanders, and threatened them with death.

Otho was not present in the action. His soldiers demanded, his two best officers advised, him to remain with the legions, or to defer a battle. They urged that fortune, the gods, and the genius (the guardian angel of pagan belief) of Otho must be crowned by victory. "The day" on which their counsel was accepted "first gave the death-blow to the Othonian cause."

Otho, now at Brocello (Brixellum), a few miles distant from Bedriacum, was awaiting without fear or drooping spirit—for his mind, in case of reverse, had long been made up—the report of the battle. Vague and discordant rumours at first reached his ear. But at last increasing troops of fugitives brought sure intelligence that all was lost. The soldiers who had accompanied him, without waiting to hear his opinion, exhorted him not to despair, but to try again "the fortune of the die." They themselves were ready to brave every danger; there were forces still in reserve: the Mæsian and Pannonian legions would join them in a few days. Flattery, they said, had done its worst in urging him to leave the army, in hurrying on the unfortunate engagement. But it was not the voice of flatterers that now implored him to take heart, and to lead them against the enemy. The soldiers who were near him fell at his feet and clasped his knees: those at a distance stretched forth their hands in token of assent. Plotius Firmus, who commanded a detachment of the body-guard, joined his prayers to those of the legions. "The noble mind," he said, "battles with adversity: it is the craven spirit that capitulates at once. Your soldiers, Cæsar, have undergone much,

yet do not despond: abandon not an army devoted to your cause; renounce not men as generous as they are brave."

They spoke to deaf ears. Otho had weighed all circumstances: the end was at hand: ambition in him was dead: he had been dazzled by the purple and its gold trappings: they had brought him only anxious days and sleepless nights: he had revelled with Nero: he had enjoyed some repose in his Lusitanian province: he had helped Galba to a throne; he had hurled him from it. He had shed blood enough already, he had tasted the extremes of luxury and "fierce civil strife," and all was vanity. He addressed to his faithful guards some words of gratitude, but he left none of his hearers in doubt as to his fixed purpose to have done with wars and with life—presently and for ever.

From the soldiers he turned to his weeping friends. Calm and untroubled himself, with a serene countenance, with a firm voice, he besought them to be calm and resigned. He advised all to quit the town without loss of time, and to make their terms with the conqueror. For all who were willing to depart he provided boats and carriages. From his papers and letters he selected all such as might, under a new Cæsar, be injurious to the writers of them—all that expressed duty towards himself or ill-will to Vitellius—and committed them to the flames. "For the general good," he said, "I am a willing victim. For myself, I have won ample renown, and I leave to my family an illustrious name." Towards the close of day he called for cold water, and having quenched his thirst, ordered two daggers to be brought him. He tried the points of both, and laid one of them under his pillow. Once

more assuring himself that all who wished had left the town, he passed the night in quiet. At the dawn of day, he stabbed himself through the heart. One wound sufficed, but his dying groans caught the ears of his freedmen and slaves. They rushed into his chamber, and among them Plotius Firmus. In compliance with his earnest request, his body was burnt without delay. The ghastly spectacle of Galba's and Piso's heads fixed on lances and exhibited to a brutal soldiery and populace was doubtless present to his mind when ordering this speedy passage to the funeral pyre. His corpse was borne to it by the prætorians "with praises and tears, covering his wound and his hands with kisses." Some killed themselves near the pyre—"not moved," says Tacitus, "by remorse or by fear, but by the desire to emulate his glory, and by love of their prince." "Over his ashes was built a tomb, unpretending, and therefore likely to stand." He ended his life in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and had reigned just three months. Rarely, if ever, does history present an example of swifter retribution for treachery and treason.

The Vitellian generals moved in three divisions. Valens advanced through Gaul, and so by the Mont Genèvre into Italy; Cæcina through the eastern cantons of Switzerland, and over the Great St Bernard; while Vitellius followed more leisurely in the rear of his legates. Every district through which they respectively passed was ravaged; villages, and sometimes large towns, were sacked or burnt; but the richer land south of the Alps was the principal sufferer. The soldiers of Otho, it was said, had exhausted Italy, but it was desolated by the Vitellians. The

fierce warriors of the north, Romans only in name, fell without remorse on the borough-towns and colonies, and, as it were, rehearsed on their march the licence they hoped to indulge in at Rome. From Pavia Vitellius proceeded to Cremona, and thence diverged from his route to cross the plain of Bedriacum, in order to behold the scene of the recent victory. The aspect of the field of battle, and the brutality of the victor, are thus described by Tacitus :—

"It was a hideous and a horrible sight. Not forty days had passed since the battle, and there lay mangled corpses, severed limbs, the putrefying forms of men and horses. The soil was saturated with gore; and, what with levelled trees and crops, horrible was the desolation. Not less revolting was that portion of the road which the people of Cremona had strown with laurel-leaves and roses, and on which they had raised altars, and sacrificed victims, as if to greet some barbarous despot—festivities in which they delighted for the moment, but which were afterwards to work their ruin. Valens and Cæcina were present, and pointed out the various localities of the field of battle, showing how from one point the columns of the legions had rushed to the attack; how from another the cavalry had charged; how from a third the auxiliary troops had turned the flank of the enemy. The tribunes and prefects extolled their individual achievements, and mixed together fictions, facts, and exaggerations. The common soldiers also turned aside from the line of march with joyful shouts, recognised the various scenes of conflict, and gazed with wonder on the piles of weapons and the heaps of slain. Some indeed there were whom all this moved to thoughts of the muta-

bility of fortune, to pity and to tears. Vitellius did not turn away his eyes—did not shudder to behold the unburied corpses of so many thousands of his countrymen; nay, in his exultation, in his ignorance of the doom which was so close upon himself, he actually instituted a religious ceremony in honour of the tutelary gods of the place."

It was said that Vitellius expressed a brutal pleasure at the spectacle. He called for bowls of wine—he circulated them freely among his suite and soldiers—he declared that "the corpse of an enemy smells always well, particularly that of a fellow-citizen." We will now leave him in Rome, where he was of course greeted by the shouts of the populace, the flattery of the upper classes, and innumerable applications for places and favours. Well had Tiberius said of his Roman subjects, that they were "born to be slaves."

CHAPTER VII.

'HISTORY.'

VITELLIUS.

THE legions in Syria and Egypt had taken the oath to Galba and Otho without a murmur, but when required for the third time within a few weeks to transfer their allegiance to an enemy of both those Cæsars, they hesitated for a while and then obeyed with an ill grace. Between the armies of the northern and eastern provinces there had long been jealousies and rivalry, and the choice of Vitellius by the German, excited angry feelings in the Syrian camps. They were not less numerous, they were better disciplined and disposed, they had been very recently winning new laurels in the north of Palestine; why should they not put forward their claim to appoint a Cæsar as well as the lazy and over-paid prætorians, or the mutinous legions of the Rhine? In one very important respect, indeed, they were better situated than either the body-guards or the Rhenish divisions. Neither Otho nor Vitellius could be termed a happy choice, unless to be a notorious profligate or an unsurpassed glutton were a recommendation for empire. They, at least at Antioch and in Galilee, had two leaders of

mark and likelihood, who had already proved their fitness to rule by their obedience and ability in lower stations.

The characters of these very capable leaders are thus drawn in a few strokes by Tacitus:—

"Syria and its four legions were under the command of Licinius Mucianus, a man whose good and bad fortune was equally famous. In his youth, he had cultivated with many intrigues the friendship of the great. His resources soon failed, and his position became precarious, and as he also suspected that Claudius had taken some offence, he withdrew into a retired part of Asia [Minor], and was as like an exile as he was afterwards like an emperor. He was a compound of dissipation and energy, of arrogance and courtesy, of good and bad qualities. His self-indulgence was excessive when he had leisure, yet whenever he had served he had shown great qualities. In his public capacity he might be praised: his private life was in bad repute. Yet over subjects, friends, and colleagues, he exercised the influence of many fascinations. He was a man who would find it easier to transfer the imperial power to another than to hold it for himself. He was eminent for his magnificence, for his wealth, and for a greatness that transcended in all respects the condition of a subject. Readier of speech than Vespasian, he thoroughly understood the arrangement and direction of civil business." *

"Vespasian was an energetic soldier: he could march at the head of his army, choose the place for his camp, and bring by night and day his skill, or, if

* Hist., i. 10; ii. 5.

the occasion required, his personal courage, to oppose the foe. His food was such as chance offered: his dress and appearance hardly distinguished him from the common soldier; in short, but for his avarice, he was equal to the generals of old."

The Cæsar "for whom fortune was now preparing, in a distant part of the world, the origin and rise of a new dynasty," had no illustrious images in the hall of his fathers. His family belonged to the Sabine burgh of Reatè, and had never risen to public honours, but he himself had seen much service. Nero's freedman and favourite, Narcissus, appointed him to the command of a legion in Britain, where he highly distinguished himself and earned triumphal ornaments. He was one of the consuls in the year 51 A.D. But those whom Narcissus promoted became the subject of the younger Agrippina's aversion, and not until after her fall did Vespasian obtain any further employment. In 52 he was proconsul of Africa, and, strange to tell, he left the province poorer than he came to it—a fact scarcely reconcilable with Tacitus's imputation of "avarice." He was not only an unready speaker, but also an indifferent courtier, and got into disgrace with Nero for going to sleep while the Cæsar was singing and playing before a delighted—or perchance a disgusted—audience of Corinthians, Olympians, or the fastidious men of Athens. Such behaviour was too much for Nero's patience, and the tasteless Vespasian was ordered to begone and take his impertinent naps in his own house. But when serious disturbances arose in Judæa, he was too good an officer to be overlooked, and was appointed to the government of Palestine, and to the command of the forces there, or to be

sent thither, at the close of 66 A.D. At the time of this promotion he was in his sixty-first year.

Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by Tiberius Alexander, the prefect of Egypt, and it may be inferred without his own knowledge or consent at the moment. Long he pondered on the proposal even while surrounded by his own officers and men. It was, in fact, a very serious matter to be hailed "Imperator." Within a few months three Cæsars had perished—Nero by the hand of a slave, Galba by the swords of the prætorians, and Otho by his own dagger. The supplications of the army, and the urgency of Mucianus—they had been on bad terms, but were now reconciled—overcame his scruples, and he confirmed the choice of the prefect of Egypt by accepting the purple from the Syrian legionaries. An intensely practical man when not at a concert or a play, he instantly took measures for establishing his claim, but he did not hurry to Italy, although the eyes of all its better men had long been turned to Palestine. The forces of the east were divided into three portions. Of these, one was deemed sufficient to encounter the Vitellians; a second was retained in the east, to continue, under Titus, the Judæan war; to watch the Armenian and Parthian border was the task of the third. The revolt against Vitellius was making rapid strides: some provinces remained neutral; others, Britain and the Rhenish, could not afford to part with a cohort, and the emperor at Rome squandered in vulgar and brutal sensuality the money he needed for the payment of his troops.

The march of the Vespasians did not materially differ from that of the Vitellians. Again Italy north

of the Po was ravaged, and once more on the field of Bedriacum an empire was lost and won. But among the leaders of the eastern army was one who by his energy and enterprise relieves the uniformity of the narrative. In Antonius Primus we find a Paladin; a Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, the hero of the Succession War in Spain. At the head of three legions he seized the passes of the Julian Alps. Far inferior to the enemy in strength, his officers advised him to await the arrival of Mucianus. But delay suited not the eager spirit of Antonius, who, moreover, was resolved to win the victory alone. Twice he restored the fortune of the day at Bedriacum; and after a brave defence by the Vitellians, he broke through their camp before the walls of Cremona, and received the keys of that proverbially unfortunate city. From that moment the fate of Vitellius himself was decided.

The city had surrendered under a promise of protection, but Antonius did not, perhaps could not, keep his word. As yet he had not rewarded his soldiers with booty or licence. It is said that when taking a bath after the fatigues of the assault, he had complained of the water not being warm enough. "It soon shall be hotter," said an attendant; and his words were caught up by the soldiers as if they were a signal for burning the town. In a few hours one of the most beautiful of Cisalpine cities was reduced to ashes.

Vitellius, content with sending to the seat of war Cæcina and Fabius Valens, abandoned himself to his wonted coarse indulgences; he neither attended to his soldiers nor showed himself to the people. "Buried in the shades of his gardens, among the woods of La Riccia [Aricia], like those sluggish animals which,

if you supply them with food, lie motionless and torpid, he had dismissed with the same forgetfulness the past, the present, and the future." For cruelties, indeed, he found leisure occasionally. He was startled by tidings of revolt and disaffection. The fleet at Ravenna had gone over to the enemy. Cæcina had made an attempt, an abortive one, to pass over to Vespasian. "In that dull soul joy was more powerful than apprehension." As soon as he learned that his own soldiers had put Cæcina in irons, he returned exulting to Rome. Before a crowded assembly of the people he applauded the obedience of the legions, and sent to prison the prefect of the prætorian guard, who, as a friend of Cæcina, might, he thought, follow his example.

Antonius had crossed the Apennines. In the valley of the Nar the two armies once more confronted one another; but deserted by their emperor, and without leaders, the Vitellians had no spirit for fighting. They were incorporated with the Vespasians. The slothful emperor, says Tacitus, "would have forgotten that he was, or rather had been one, had not his foes reminded him of his rank." Antonius offered him terms, which were confirmed by Mucianus. His life should be spared; a quiet retreat in Campania, the garden and the vineyard of Rome, with a large income, was proposed to and accepted by him.

But Rome had yet to drink the cup of woe to the dregs. Once more, as in the civil wars of the commonwealth, the city was to be sacked and the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter to be burnt. Terms were being drawn up for a peaceful surrender of the capital and the abdication of the emperor. Flavius Sabinus, the

elder brother of Vespasian, had remained during all these revolutions in Rome, and now represented him. In the temple of Apollo, on the Palatine, "the transfer of the empire was debated and settled."

But it was not accomplished so easily. Rome was filled with fugitives from the seat of war, and well aware that no mercy for them could be looked for if Antonius were once master of the city, they dinned in the ears of their sluggish chief, that for him the post of danger was a private station. Was Antonius a man to keep his word? Would legions who had shown themselves false, be true to promises or covenants? How long would he enjoy his Campanian retreat, or his ample revenues? He was compelled to return to his palace, not indeed to resume his functions, but to await his doom. For the last time he entered the Palatine house, hardly knowing whether he were still emperor or not.

The transfer which the soldiers refused to ratify was, however, considered valid by the senate, the knights, the magistrates and police of the city, and they urged Sabinus to arm against the German cohorts, to vindicate his brother's claim to the purple, and to defend Rome, the citizens, and himself from the fury of these ruffians. Sabinus complied; but his force was small; his measures were hurried and insufficient; he was attacked and routed by the Vitellians, and compelled to take refuge in the Capitol. Some communications took place between Sabinus and Vitellius, but they were idle, for the reply of the nominal emperor was merely an apology for the conduct of his supporters. He indeed "had not now the power either to command or to forbid. He

was no longer emperor; he was merely the cause of war."

The following description has the appearance of being written by an eyewitness of the respective scenes :—

The envoy of Sabinus "had hardly returned to the Capitol, when the infuriated soldiery arrived, without any leader, every man acting on his own impulse. They hurried at quick march past the Forum and the temples which hang over it, and advanced their line up the opposite hill as far as the outer gates of the Capitol. There were formerly certain colonnades on the right side of the slope as one went up; the defenders, issuing forth on the roof of these buildings, showered tiles and stones on the Vitellians. The assailants were not armed with anything but swords, and it seemed too tedious to send for machines and missiles. They threw lighted brands at a projecting colonnade, and following the track of the fire would have burst through the half-burnt gates of the Capitol, had not Sabinus, tearing down on all sides the statues, the glories of former generations, formed them into a barricade across the opening. They then assailed the opposite approaches to the Capitol, near the grove of the Asylum, and where the Tarpeian rock is mounted by a hundred steps. Both these attacks were unexpected: the closer and fiercer of the two threatened the Asylum. The assailants could not be checked as they mounted the continuous line of buildings, which, as was natural in a time of profound peace, had grown up to such a height as to be on a level with the soil of the Capitol. A doubt arises at this point, whether it was the assailants who threw lighted brands on to the roofs, or whether,

as the more general account has it, the besieged thought thus to repel the assailants, who were now making vigorous progress. From them the fire passed to the colonnades adjoining the temples: the eagles supporting the pediment, which were of old timber, caught the flames. And so the Capitol, with its gates shut, neither defended by friends nor spoiled by a foe, was burnt to the ground."

The historian proceeds to relate the final victory of the Vitellians. The besiegers "burst in, carrying everywhere the firebrand and the sword." Some of the Vespasian leaders were cut down at once: the younger of the Flavian princes, Domitian, unluckily for his own fame and the empire, escaped in the disguise of an acolyte of the temple, while Sabinus and the consul Quinctius Atticus were loaded with chains and brought before Vitellius. He received his captives "with anything but anger in his words and looks, amidst the murmurs of those who demanded the privilege of slaying them and their pay for the work they had done." He was preparing to intercede: he was compelled to yield; he was now a mere cipher; and the body of Sabinus, pierced and mutilated, and with the head severed from it, was dragged to the Gemoniæ.

In a few days the Flavian legions were at the gates of Rome. Numerous engagements took place before the walls, and amid the beautiful gardens in the suburbs, generally ending in favour of the Flavians. The Vitellians were defeated at every point. But they rallied again within the city.

"The populace," says Tacitus, "stood by and watched the combatants," as the people of Paris did when

the Allies were, in 1814, fighting with the French for the possession of Montmartre; "and as though it had been a mimic combat"—of gladiators in the arena, or of the Red and Blue factions of charioteers in the Flaminian Circus—"encouraged first one party and then the other by their shouts and plaudits. Whenever either side gave way, they cried out that those who concealed themselves in the shops, or took refuge in any private house, should be dragged out and butchered, and they secured the larger share of the booty; for, while the soldiers were busy with bloodshed and massacre, the spoils fell to the crowd. It was a terrible and hideous sight that presented itself throughout the city. Here battle and death were raging: there the bath and the tavern were crowded. In one spot were pools of blood and heaps of corpses, and close by prostitutes and men of character as infamous. There were all the debaucheries of luxurious peace, all the horrors of a city most cruelly sacked, till one was ready to believe the country to be mad at once with rage and lust."

Amid this scene of carnage, it is some satisfaction to know that condign punishment fell on the German soldiers. They were driven to their last stronghold. The prætorian camp to which they had fled was desperately defended as well as strenuously assailed. The Flavians, expecting that Rome itself would stand a siege, had brought with them their artillery: with their catapults they cleared the battlements: they raised mounds or towers to the level of the ramparts: they applied fire to the gates. The gates were battered down; the walls were breached; quarter was denied; and, according to one account, fifty thousand men were slain.

Vitellius made a vain attempt to escape. His wife Galeria had a house on the Aventine, and thither he was conveyed in a litter, purposing to fly in the night-time to his brother's camp at Terracina. But, infirm of purpose, he returned to the palace, whence even the meanest slaves had fled, or where those who remained in it shunned his presence. He wandered through its long corridors and halls, shrinking from every sound: "he tried the closed doors, he shuddered in the empty chambers," he trembled at the echo of his own foot-falls. In the morning he was discovered; "his hands were bound behind his back; he was led along with tattered robes; many reviled, no one pitied him." He was cut down by a German soldier, who may have owed him a grudge, or have wished to release him from insult. The soldiers pricked him on with their weapons when his pace slackened, or stopped him to witness his own statues hurled from their pedestals and broken by their fall. He was compelled to gaze on the spot where a few months before Galba had fallen. A sword placed beneath his chin kept his head erect, exposing to a brutal mob his haggard looks; his visage was besmeared with mud and filth; and, wounded as he already was, he was smitten on the cheek as he passed through the long files of his persecutors. When he reached the Gemoniæ, where the corpse of Flavius Sabinus had so recently lain, he fell under a shower of blows; "and the mob," says Tacitus (and he might probably have added senators and knights also), "reviled him when dead with the same heartlessness with which they had flattered him living. One speech, it was his last, showed a spirit not utterly degraded. To a tribune who in-

sulted him he answered, — 'Yet I was once your emperor.'"

We must not pass over, though we can merely refer to, an episode in the 'History' of Tacitus, that in which he treats of the revolt of the Germans. The destruction of three emperors, the disturbances in Judæa, the devastation of Italy, had severely strained the sinews of the empire. But its imminent danger at this period lay not south of the Alps, but on the borders of the Rhine and the Danube. The main interest of this episode consists not in sieges and battles, in the fidelity or faithlessness of States or individuals, in the lawless conduct of the armies, or the feeble and fluctuating measures of their generals. These were features common to every district visited by the civil, or more properly the imperial, wars of 69 and 70 A.D. The revolt of Germany was an insurrection against Roman rule itself, not against any one of the four competitors for the purple. It was a widely spread, for a while an ably organised movement, and at more than one period it had the appearance of a successful one. It reveals to us how deeply that rule had been affected by the extravagance and cruelty of such Cæsars as Caligula or Nero: to what extent by their indulgence they had demoralised the armies and degraded the majesty of the empire. Yet it also shows how strong and effective was its organisation: how unable to cope with it were the most valiant and disciplined of the rebels. Had the coalition of Germans and Gauls been sound and sincere, had the authors and leaders of it added to their enthusiasm the steady and sagacious temper of the warriors and statesmen who had made Rome the mistress of the world, it is difficult to see how the

empire could have survived, bleeding and faint as it was at the time from a fierce civil conflict of about eighteen months. The purpose of the confederates was to throw off then and for ever the yoke of Rome, —to effect on a far grander scale what the Italians had attempted more than a century and half before, when they set up a new capital, Italica, and threatened to destroy the den of the Roman wolves. It was a hostile empire that the Germans aimed at, — a far more formidable one than the Parthian had ever been, or than the great Mithridates had ever imagined. Independent Germany would not supply the legions with recruits: independent Gaul would not pay into the Roman treasury bars of silver, or sesterces. Both Gauls and Germans were well acquainted with Roman tactics; many thousands of both nations were enrolled in the legions or served as auxiliaries, and so were the better able to encounter them in the field.

On the other hand, the eastern provinces were ill fitted to recruit the armies of Rome, now in some measure thinned and exhausted by the civil war. By Italy itself, at least south of the Po, a very few cohorts only could be furnished. The brave and hardy Samnites and Marsians no longer existed in any number. They had been swept off in the Social and earlier Civil wars. Much of their land had become sheep-walks; and the place of hardy shepherds, ploughmen, and vine-dressers was filled up by slaves. The once populous Latium was divided among a few landholders, and towns like Gabii or Ulubrae now stood in huge parks, and when not quite deserted, were inhabited by a few peasants or tavern-keepers. The large farms, said Pliny the Naturalist, have been the ruin of Italy.

All these circumstances rendered the German revolt most grave and menacing. That it appeared so to Tacitus, is plain from several passages in his works. Could the Germans only be induced to destroy one another, Rome might sleep in comparative security, and thank her presiding deities for the feuds of her enemy. In his 'Germany'* he writes thus of a happy accident of the kind: "The Chamavi and Angrivarii utterly exterminated the Bructeri, with the common help of the neighbouring tribes, either from hatred of their tyranny, or from the attractions of plunder, or from heaven's favourable regard to us. It did not even grudge us the spectacle of the conflict. I pray that there may long last among the nations, if not a love for us, at least a hatred for each other; for, while the destinies of empire hurry us on, fortune can bestow no greater boon than discord among our foes."

In Antonius Primus we have at least the semblance of an adventurous and able leader of a division. He is a sort of Achilles or Joachim Murat; but in Claudius Civilis we have an able general and statesman combined. Tacitus evidently bestowed great pains on his portraiture. Civilis was of a noble Batavian family, and had served twenty-five years in the Roman armies. He must have been forty at least when he formed the project of revolt, since for a quarter of a century he had fought wherever the imperial eagles flew, or been stationed wherever there was a Roman camp. For some offence he had incurred the displeasure of a Cæsar or his legate. "It is," he says, "a noble reward that I have received for my toils: my brother

* Chap. 33.

murdered, myself imprisoned, my death demanded by the savage clamour of a legion; and for which wrongs I by the law of nations now demand vengeance."

Civilis perceiving, or surmising, that since Nero's death Rome was in no condition to war successfully with a distant ally, devoted himself thenceforth to what he justly considered a noble cause. The Batavian Wallace was no barbarian. Like the Cheruscan German hero Arminius, he had received a Roman education, and he had learned more than schoolmasters, lecturers, or books could teach him. He had seen the capital in perhaps its most low and degraded state; he had witnessed the public excesses and prodigality of Nero; he had perhaps heard, whispered with bated breath, of the orgies of the palace. The hour, it seemed to him, had come when he might deliver the Batavian island, if not Germany itself, from the tyranny and the vices of Rome.

As to the Germans of the Rhine, they had little dread from the garrisons or camps of the Cæsar. Vitellius had withdrawn from many if not all of them their best troops when he despatched seven legions across the Alps; and in fact there was just then no Cæsar. Galba had been murdered, Otho had destroyed himself, and Vitellius was daily exhibiting his unfitness for empire. Vespasian, whose character he knew, might give cause for some alarm to Civilis. They had once been companions in arms, and even friends; for the Flavian competitor for the throne was at one time, like Civilis himself, an obscure adventurer, and his chance of victory was still doubtful. The very attempt, however, of the Flavian was favorable to the designs of the Batavian, since he could and for a while

did, pretend that he was recruiting and drilling soldiers for his former comrade; and he had even instructions from Antonius Primus to hinder any more German levies from being sent southward. Here, then, was an excellent mask for the first movements of the conspiracy of Gaul and Teuton against Rome.

By his eloquence, his skill in political combination, and by his knowledge of the character and condition at the time of the leading men of Rome and the empire, Civilis was enabled to effect a general confederation of all the Netherland tribes, both Celtic and German. He availed himself of the popular religion or superstition. The name of Veleda has already been mentioned. "She was regarded," says Tacitus, "by many as a divinity." The dwelling of this Deborah of the Bructeri was a lofty tower in the neighbourhood of the river Lippe (Luppia). Many were those who consulted, but none were permitted to see her. Mystery, she justly held—and her opinion has been held by many prophetic persons both before and since Veleda delivered oracles—"inspired the greater respect." The questions of her suppliants and the answers to them were conveyed by a relative of the prophetess. The first successes of the revolt greatly increased her reputation, for she had foretold victory to the Germans. With her Civilis was in constant communication—doubtless supplied her with the latest news from Gaul, Italy, and the Rhine; and thus her predictions, being not without foundation in facts, gained for the Batavian leader some allies, and induced many tribes of Germany to send him subsidies or supplies for his army.

The advantages possessed by the Batavians are thus set forth by their commander. Collecting his

countrymen in one of the sacred groves, he thus harangued them: "There is now no alliance, as once there was [with Rome]. We are treated as slaves. We are handed over to prefects and centurions, and when they are glutted with our spoils and our blood, then they are changed, and new receptacles for plunder, new terms for spoliation, are discovered. Now the conscription is at hand, tearing, we may say, for ever children from parents, and brothers from brothers. Never has the power of Rome been more depressed. In the winter quarters of the legions there is nothing but property to plunder and a few old men. Only dare to look up, and cease to tremble at the empty names of legions. For we have a vast force of horse and foot; we have the Germans our kinsmen; we have Gaul bent on the same objects." *

On another occasion, addressing the people of Trêves (Treveri) he says:—"What reward do you and other enslaved creatures expect for the blood which you have shed so often? What but a hateful service, perpetual tribute, the rod, the axe, and the passions of a ruling race? See how I, the prefect of a single cohort, with the Batavians and the Canninefates, a mere fraction of Gaul, have destroyed their vast but useless camps, or am pressing them with the close blockade of famine and the sword. In a word, either freedom will follow on our efforts, or, if we are vanquished, we shall but be what we were before." †

The Roman view of the question Tacitus has given in the speech of Petilius Cærealis, the ablest officer engaged in the German war. He had shown in action

* Hist., iv. ch. 14. † Ibid. ch. 31.

that the union of Gauls and Germans could not be depended on: that although trained in Roman barracks, the tribes of Rhineland and Batavia were unable, in the long-run, to mate and master the discipline, the swift and precise movements, of the regular legions. Gauls, he said, can have no real affinity with Germans. He proceeds: "It was not to defend Italy that we"—the Romans—"occupied the borders of the Rhine, but to insure that no second Ariovistus should seize the empire of Gaul. Do you fancy yourselves to be dearer in the eyes of Civilis and the Batavians and the Transrhenane tribes than your fathers and grandfathers were to their ancestors? There have ever been the same causes to make the Germans cross over into Gaul—lust, avarice, and the longing for a new home, prompting them to leave their own marshes and deserts, and to possess themselves of this most fertile soil, and of you its inhabitants.

"Gaul has always had its petty kingdoms and intestine wars, till you submitted to our authority. We, though so often provoked, have used the right of conquest to burden you only with the cost of maintaining peace. For the tranquillity of nations cannot be preserved without armies; armies cannot exist without pay; pay cannot be furnished without tribute: all else is common between us. You often command our legions. You rule these and other provinces. There is no privilege, no exclusion. From worthy emperors you derive equal advantage, though you dwell so far away, while cruel rulers are most formidable to those near at hand. Endure the passions and rapacity of your masters, just as you bear barren seasons, and excessive rains, and other natural evils.

There will be vices as long as there are men. But they are not perpetual, and they are compensated by the occurrence of better things."

Civilis was in the end unsuccessful. He was deserted, if not actually betrayed, by his allies; with the usual fickleness of barbarians, their zeal soon cooled down: some thought they did enough for him if they helped him to win a battle or two; some that they did enough for themselves when they had plundered a Roman colony or camp. Soldiers who went to their homes, or turned to common brigandage when they pleased, were not fitted to contend long with the severely disciplined Roman legions; and as soon as Vespasian was able to pour division after division into the seat of war, the Batavian commonwealth ceased to exist. Even Civilis perceived at last that he must come to terms with the legate, Petilius Cerialis. With the preparation for their interview the mutilated 'History' closes abruptly; the fragment, however, is too interesting to be omitted.

The lower classes of the Batavians were murmuring at the length of the war; the nobles were still more impatient and spoke in fiercer language. "We have been driven into war," they said, "by the fury of Civilis. He sought to counterbalance his private wrongs by the destruction of his nation. We are at the last extremity. The Germans already are falling away from us; the Gauls have returned to their servitude; we must repent, 'and avow our repentance by punishing the guilty.'

"These dispositions did not escape the notice of Civilis. He determined to anticipate them, moved not only by weariness of his sufferings, but also by the

clinging to life which often breaks the noblest spirits. He asked for a conference. The bridge over the river Nabalia was cut down, and the two generals advanced to the broken extremities. Civilis thus opened the conference: 'If it were before a legate of Vitellius that I were defending myself, my acts would deserve no pardon, my words no credit. All the relations between us were those of hatred and hostility, first made so by him, and afterwards embittered by me. My respect for Vespasian is of long standing. While he was still a subject, we were called friends. This was known to Primus Antonius, whose letters urged me to take up arms, for he feared lest the legions of Germany and the youth of Gaul should cross the Alps. What Antonius advised by his letters, Herdeonius suggested by word of mouth. I fought the same battle in Germany as did Mucianus in Syria, Aponius in Mæsia, Flavianus in Pannonia.'" . . . . .

The mutilation of ancient manuscripts is one of the curiosities, no less than of the calamities of literature. By an unaccountable coincidence—can it have been accident, or was it design?—the 'Annals' also, as we have them, close with an interrupted speech of the dying Thrasea. In each instance so great is our loss that we may well apply to Tacitus the lines of Milton—

> "Oh sad Virgin, that thy power
> Might raise Musæus from his bower,
> . . . . . .
> Or call up him that left half told
> The story of Cambuscan bold."

CHAPTER VIII.

'HISTORY.'

VESPASIAN.

THE cool and wary veteran was in no haste to take possession of the capital of the Roman world. He had accepted, with seeming reluctance, the title of emperor. He might fairly be perplexed by the conduct of Mucianus, since, although when success was doubtful he had urged Vespasian to comply with the desire of the soldiers, yet, now that the prize was won, might he not claim it for himself? Assured of the loyalty of his elder son Titus, he might view with just suspicion the designs of his younger son Domitian—not because this vain and profligate boy was in himself formidable, but because it was impossible to foresee what might happen in a city where a venal soldiery, a servile senate, and a brutal mob might, at any moment, start a new competitor for the throne. Were the rich, the eloquent, the magnificent Mucianus, to greet him on his arrival with such words as—

> "Sir, by your patience,
> I hold you but as subject of this war,
> Not as a brother," *—

* King Lear, Act v.

what answer could the plain, uneloquent, and low-born townsman of Reatè have returned?

Vespasian, by delaying his entrance into the capital, obtained two advantages. Firstly, he incurred no immediate unpopularity, as the unfortunate Galba had done, through the cruelties and misconduct of his soldiers.

"When Vitellius was dead," writes the historian, "the war indeed had come to an end; but peace had yet to begin. Sword in hand, throughout the capital, the conquerors hunted down the conquered with merciless hatred. The streets were choked with carnage, the squares and temples reeked with blood; for men were massacred everywhere as chance threw them in the way. Soon, as their licence increased, they began to search for and drag forth hidden foes. Whenever they saw a man tall and young they cut him down, making no distinction between soldiers and civilians. But the ferocity which, in the first impulse of hatred, could be gratified only by blood, soon passed into the greed of gain. They let nothing be kept secret, nothing be closed. Vitellianists, they pretended, might thus be concealed. Here was the first step to breaking open private houses—here, if resistance were made, a pretext for slaughter. The most needy of the populace and the most worthless of the slaves did not fail to come forward and betray their wealthy masters; others were denounced by their friends. Everywhere were lamentations and wailings, and all the miseries of a captured city, till the licence of the troops of Otho and Vitellius, once so odious, was remembered with regret. The leaders of the party, so energetic in kindling strife, were incapable of checking the abuse of victory."

Secondly, by remaining for some time at Alexandria, he was in a position to lay an embargo on the corn-supply from Egypt, one of the principal granaries of Rome. And besides that, he was within a few days' sail of the province of Africa, whence she derived also a large portion of her daily bread. Nothing was so likely to excite the Roman mob as even the apprehension of a dearth. Even if Mucianus had coveted the purple, he was comparatively feeble so long as the Flavian Cæsar could retard or withhold the staple food of the capital.

Adverse winds favored Vespasian's purpose of not arriving prematurely at Rome. He found that confidence might be placed in the governor of Syria; he wished, perhaps, that the first necessary severities should be over before he presented himself at the gates. Meanwhile his sojourn at Alexandria was not without favorable results for him. "Vespasian," observes Dean Merivale, "was already assuming in the eyes of the Romans something of the divine character; the Flavian race was beginning to supplant the Julian in their imagination, or rather, what was wanting to the imagination was supplied by the spirit of flattery which represented the hero himself and all that concerned him in factitious colours. It began to be affirmed that the marvellous rise of the Sabine veteran had been signified long before by no doubtful omens at home; a Jewish captive, the historian Josephus, had prophetically saluted him as emperor; the "common" and "constant belief" of the Jews, that from the midst of them should spring a ruler of the world, was declared to have received in this event its glorious consummation."*

* History of the Romans, ch. lvii.

That a prediction which for many generations had fed the hopes and soothed the sorrows of the children of Israel should find its fulfilment in the person of an obscure Gentile, was certainly not intended by prophet or seer. But the faith of believers in it was singularly confirmed by two events that happened to Vespasian in Egypt. It is not by any means easy to discover what were the religious feelings of Tacitus; at times he appears to have been a fatalist, at times an orthodox believer in the religion of the State; in the following narrative he has evidently no doubt as to the truth of the cure, if not of the miracle wrought by the emperor.

"In the months during which Vespasian was waiting at Alexandria for the periodical return of the summer gales and settled weather at sea, many wonders occurred which seemed to point him out as the object of the favor of heaven and the partiality of the gods. One of the common people of Alexandria, whom all men there knew to be blind, threw himself at the emperor's knees, and implored him with groans to heal his infirmity. He begged Vespasian that he would deign to moisten his cheeks and eyeballs with his spittle. Another with a diseased hand prayed that the limb might feel the print of a Cæsar's foot. At first Vespasian ridiculed and repulsed them. They persisted, and he, though on the one hand he feared the scandal of a fruitless attempt, yet, on the other, was induced by the entreaties of the men and by the language of his flatterers to hope for success. At last he ordered that the opinion of physicians should be taken, as to whether such blindness and infirmity were within the reach of human skill. They discussed the

matter from different points of view. 'In the one case,' they said, 'the faculty of sight was not wholly destroyed, and might return if the obstacles were removed; in the other case, the limb, which had fallen into a diseased condition, might be restored if a healing influence were applied;' such, perhaps, might be the pleasure of the gods, and the emperor might be chosen to be the minister of the divine will; at any rate, all the glory of a successful remedy would be Cæsar's, while the ridicule of failure would fall on the sufferers. And so Vespasian, supposing that all things were possible to his good fortune, and that nothing was any longer past belief, with a joyful countenance, amid the intense expectation of the multitude of bystanders, accomplished what was required. The hand was instantly restored to its use, and the light of day again shone upon the blind. Persons actually present attest both facts, even now, when nothing is to be gained by falsehood."

Voltaire joyfully proclaimed the authenticity of this miracle; Hume applauds the cautious and penetrating genius of the historian. Paley dissects the particulars of the narrative, and points out a flaw in it. The blind man applied to the emperor for his aid "by the advice of the god Serapis, whom the Egyptians, devoted as they are to many superstitions, worship more than any other divinity." Tacitus, Paley infers, put in these words as a saving clause, in order that his readers might not suspect him of a weak credulity. It will hardly be denied that this pagan miracle was well attested.

His succ[illegible] the healing of the lame and blind inspired Ve[illegible] with a keen desire to visit the sanc-

tuary of the god who had afforded him this opportunity for displaying a power, till then quite unsuspected by himself, and again a wonder was vouchsafed to a Cæsar in whom imagination was not a prevailing element, and who probably was content with the religion of the State and his Sabine forefathers. A deity so wise as Serapis must be able to give him sound advice about his own interests. He gave orders that, during his visit, all persons should be excluded from the temple. He had entered and was absorbed in worship,—

"When he saw behind him one of the chief men of Egypt, named Basilides, whom he knew at the time to be detained by sickness at a considerable distance, as much as several days' journey from Alexandria. He inquired of the priests, whether Basilides had on this day entered the temple. He inquired of others whom he met whether he had been seen in the city. At length, sending some horsemen, he ascertained that at that very instant the man had been eighty miles distant. He then concluded that it was a divine apparition, and discovered an oracular force in the name of Basilides [son of a king]."

The unfavourable winds that detained him at Alexandria deprived Vespasian of the opportunity for presiding at the solemn and important ceremony of laying the foundation of the new Capitol. Its restoration was the first care of the senate as soon as peace was established in the city; for while the temple was a charred and shapeless ruin, the fortunes of the empire seemed to suffer an eclipse. For an account of the ceremonial observed we borrow—and English readers will be grateful to us for doing so—the words of Dean Merivale:—

"This pious work was intrusted, according to ancient precedent, to one of the most respected of the citizens, by name Lucius Vestinus, who, though only of knightly family, was equal in personal repute to any of the senators. The Haruspices, whom he consulted, demanded that the ruins of the fallen building should be conveyed away and cast into the lowest places of the city, and the new temple erected precisely on the old foundations; for the gods, they declared, would have no change made in the form of their familiar dwelling. On the 20th of June, 70 A.D., being a fair and cloudless day, the area of the temple-precincts was surrounded with a string of fillets and chaplets. Soldiers chosen for their auspicious names were marched into it, bearing boughs of the most auspicious trees; and the Vestals, attended by a troop of boys and girls, both whose parents were living, sprinkled it with water drawn from bubbling founts or running streamlets. Then preceded by the pontiffs, the prætor Helvidius, stalking round, sanctified the space with the mystical washing of sow's, sheep's, and bull's blood, and placed their entrails on a grassy altar. This done, he invoked Jove, Juno, and Minerva, and all the patrons of the empire, to prosper the undertaking, and raise by divine assistance their temple, founded by the piety of men. Then he touched with his hand the connected fillets, and the magistrates, the priests, the senators, the knights, with a number of the people, lent their strength to draw a great stone to the spot where the building was to commence. Beneath it they laid pieces of gold and silver money, minted for the occasion, as well as of unwrought metal; for the Haruspices forbade either

stone or metal to be used which had been employed before for profane purposes. The temple rose from the deep substructions of Tarquinius exactly, as was required, on the plan of its predecessor. Formerly, when this fane was restored under Catulus, it was wished to give greater effect to the cell by placing it on a flight of steps; and it was proposed not to heighten the building itself, which the Haruspices forbade, but to lower the platform before it. But this platform was itself the roof of a labyrinth of vaults and galleries, used for offices and storerooms, and this expedient was pronounced impracticable. Vespasian, more fortunate than his predecessor, obtained permission to raise the elevation of the edifice, which now, perhaps for the first time, was allowed to overtop the colonnades around it, and to fling its broad bulk athwart the region of the southern sky, in which the auspices were taken from the neighbouring summit of the citadel." *

When Vespasian at last entered his capital, he found awaiting him a very onerous task. The evil that Nero did lived after him. There was yet a remnant of his profligate companions: there were the informers who had furnished him with noble or wealthy victims; there were criminals to punish, and wrongs and sufferings, if possible, to heal; there were greedy soldiers to fee, and there was an empty treasury. Avarice is the only grave fault with which Tacitus upbraids his early patron. Perhaps a more appropriate term would be rigid and necessary economy. To replenish the treasury from the north-western provinces or Italy was

* History of the Romans, ch. lvii.

next to impossible. The Othonians, Vitellians, and the legions of Antonius Primus had not merely carried off the money, but also burnt the dwellings and wasted the crops of the inhabitants.

By the mutilation of the 'History,' we lose Tacitus for our guide during a most important reign, and beyond his footsteps we cannot go. It will suffice to say that Mucianus, after restoring peace and order to Rome, preferred the ease of a private station and the enjoyment of an ample fortune to the cares and perils of a throne: that Antonius Primus was coolly thanked for his services, and dismissed into obscurity, the only trace of him thenceforward being some complimentary verses of Martial's: that the extravagance of the Julian dynasty was succeeded by the sobriety of the Flavian, and that if Rome did not regain a freedom she would have abused, she enjoyed a respite from tyranny and war, under which she flourished for a season. Had the books that recorded Domitian's reign been preserved, there can be little doubt that the historian would have written them with the pen that was afterwards to describe the gloomy period of Tiberius, and the hideous excesses of Nero.

The reign, indeed, of the first Flavian Cæsar, extending over a period of ten years, passed away in uneventful tranquillity. Its more remarkable features were the simple life and moderation of the imperial household: the deference of the emperor to the senate: the re-plantation of colonies: peace on the frontiers, after the revolts in Judæa and Germany had been suppressed: the revival and encouragement of learning and literature, and even care for the people.

To English readers the most interesting portion of

the 'History' will probably be that in which Tacitus treats of the Jewish people and the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem,—and to that we now turn.

Bearing in mind the historian's relation to Vespasian and Titus, the conquerors of Judæa, to whom he owed his first advancement in public life, his account of the origin, the religion, the manners and customs of the Jewish people, is inexplicable, and, indeed, considering his opportunities for informing himself on the subject, without any apparent excuse. It cannot have been for want of means of inquiry or materials for truth that he thus misrepresents this "peculiar people." Their annals were not like those of Egypt, carved on stone, or written in symbols or an unknown tongue, both of which a century ago were unintelligible to the learned of modern Europe; nor were they stamped on bricks, like the archives of Nineveh and Babylon, which we are now only learning to read. Every educated Roman, and most Roman officials, from governors of provinces to farmers of the taxes, read and spoke Greek as easily as they did their native Latin; and the annals, the ritual, the theology of the Jews were communicated to strangers in the pages of the Septuagint more than three centuries before the time of Tacitus. The capital as well as the provinces swarmed with Jews or proselytes to Judaism, and in any one of the fourteen "regions" of Rome there were Rabbins, learned in the laws of Moses, and in the chronicles of the judges, kings, and high priests of Israel and Judah. With such resources at hand, the most inquisitive and sceptical of ancient historians contented himself with hearsay and idle traditions, and denied to an ancient race possessing a written story—to say nothing of sub-

lime poetry, of moral and even metaphysical philosophy of a high order—the care and pains he bestowed on the idle rumours or political satires of Rome.

Still more extraordinary is the apathy of Tacitus in this portion of the 'History,' when it is certain that he had before him one at least of the works of Flavius Josephus. Whether or no he consulted the 'Antiquities of the Jews,' or the autobiography of Josephus, or his tract against Apion, cannot be told; but there can be no doubt that he studied and borrowed from his 'Wars of the Jews' many facts relating to Vespasian's campaigns in Galilee, and to the siege of Jerusalem. Perhaps if the 'History' were complete as he wrote it, we should find that Josephus had been to Tacitus, for that portion of his narrative, what Polybius was to Livy while composing his Decades on the Punic and Macedonian wars.

We now afford our English readers a specimen or two of the unaccountable ignorance of Tacitus when treating of the origin and rites of the Jewish nation. "As I am about to relate," he writes, at the opening of the fifth book of the 'History,' "the last days of a famous city, it seems appropriate to throw some light on its origin. Some say that the Jews were fugitives from the island of Crete, who settled on the nearest coast of Africa about the time when Saturn was driven from his throne by the power of Jupiter." "Evidence of this is sought in the name. There is a famous mountain in Crete called Ida; the neighbouring tribe, the Idæi, came to be called Judæi by a barbarous lengthening of the national name. Others assert that in the reign of Isis the overflowing population of Egypt, led by Hierosolymus and Judas, dis-

charged itself into the neighbouring countries. Many, again, say that they were a race of Ethiopian origin, who in the time of King Cepheus were driven by fear and hatred of their neighbours to seek a new dwelling-place. Others describe them as an Assyrian horde, who, not having sufficient territory, took possession of part of Egypt, and founded cities of their own in what is called the Hebrew country, lying on the borders of Syria." In the last sentences there is a glimpse of some research. Had Tacitus peeped into the books of Genesis and Exodus, and then into Herodotus?* For there is here an apparent allusion to the migration of Jacob and his sons into Egypt, to the departure from the land of Goshen, and to the shepherd kings.

Then we come to the boils and blains that so grievously afflicted the Egyptians, but which Tacitus saddles on the Hebrews. King Boccharis, warned by the oracle of Hammon, cleanses his realm and expels from his land this impure race "detested by the gods." It is a calumny of this kind that kindled the wrath of Josephus against Apion. Tacitus proceeds: "The people, who had been collected after diligent search, finding themselves left in a desert, sat for the most part in a stupor of grief, till one of the exiles, Moyses by name, warned them not to look for any relief from God or man, but to trust to themselves, taking for a heaven-sent leader that man who should first help them to be quit of their present misery. They agreed, and in utter ignorance began to advance at random. Nothing, however, distressed them so much as the scarcity of water, and they had sunk ready to perish

* III. 34.

in all directions over the plain"—here it would seem that Tacitus had the book of Exodus or Josephus before him—"when a herd of wild asses was seen to retire from their pasture to a rock shaded by trees. Moyses followed them, and, guided by the appearance of a grassy spot, discovered an abundant supply of water. This furnished relief. After a continuous journey for six days, on the seventh they possessed themselves of a country from which they expelled the inhabitants, and in which they founded a city and a temple." This is, indeed, an abridgment of history! —the forty years spent in the wilderness and the conquest of Palestine compressed into a period of seven days!

Now for the rites and ceremonies observed by the Jews, according to Tacitus. Mindful of the services done them by the wild asses, they, in their holy place, consecrated an image of the animal who delivered them from death by thirst in the wilderness. Peculiar and perverse in all they do, the worship, invented by Moyses, is utterly unlike that of other nations. "Things sacred with us, with them have no sanctity, while they allow what with us is forbidden. Apis, in the form of an ox, was one of the greatest of Egyptian deities; therefore the Jews sacrifice that animal." As Tacitus in his day must have seen many hundreds of oxen sacrificed on Roman altars, it is not easy to understand why the Jews were perverse in doing the like. They abhor and abstain from swine's flesh, in remembrance of what they suffered when infected by the leprosy to which this animal is liable. They rest on the seventh day, because it brought with it an end of their toils; and "after a

while the charm of indolence beguiled them into giving up the seventh year also to inaction."

And yet this eccentric people, who feared not the gods and despised or hated all uncircumcised mankind—who had not an idol in their temple, nor permitted a picture to enter their dwellings — whose "customs, at once perverse and disgusting, owed their strength to their very badness,"—were not without their virtues, and these puzzled Tacitus far more than their vices. To their own countrymen, and to converts to their religion, they are singularly charitable; and be it remarked that *charity*, in the Jewish and Christian import of the word, was unknown either to Greeks or Romans. Nay, Tacitus even cannot help admiring their conception of the Deity, or some of their social practices. "It is a crime with them to kill a newly-born infant." It was not a crime at Rome. The Jews held "that the souls of all who perish in battle, or by the hands of the executioner, are immortal;" and in this faith they fought valiantly; they contemned death; they rejoiced in the number of their children. Of "the Deity, as one in essence, they have purely mental conceptions. They call those profane who make representations of God in human shape out of perishable materials. They believe that Being to be supreme and eternal, capable neither of representation nor of decay. They therefore do not allow any images to stand in their cities, much less in their temples. This flattery is not paid to their kings, nor this honor to our emperors." So far so good; but then follows a most unfortunate conjecture. "From the fact that the Jewish priests used to chant to the music of flutes and cymbals, and to wear garlands of ivy, and that a

golden vine was found in the temple, some have thought that they worshipped Father Liber (Bacchus), the conqueror of the East, though their institutions do not by any means harmonise with the theory; for Liber established a festive and cheerful worship, while the Jewish religion is tasteless and mean."

Tacitus's credulity, or negligence in inquiry, as regards the religion of the Jews, did not extend to the creeds or ceremonies of other nations; on the contrary, he occasionally indulges himself and his readers also with digressions on the subject. The vision beheld by Vespasian in the temple of Serapis leads him to describe the nature of that popular deity, and the cause and manner of his introduction into Alexandria. He mentions with evident interest the visit of Germanicus to the oracle of the Clarian Apollo, and he acquainted himself with the process used in consultation. "No Pythoness," he says, with a glance at Delphi and other shrines, "represents the god at Claros, but a priest, chosen from certain families, especially a Milesian. This hierophant, after taking down the names and numbers of the inquirers, descends into an oracular cavern in which there is a sacred spring. He drinks of its water; and then, though often ignorant of letters and ungifted with poetic talent, he gives the Clarian divinity's answers in verse, of which the subject is the secret or imparted wishes of the consultors of the oracle." In a similar manner he records the visit of Titus, then travelling from Corinth to Syria, to the temple of the Paphian Venus in the island of Cyprus; and he thinks it not tedious to bestow a few words on the origin of the worship, the antiquity of the building, and the form

of the goddess,—since nowhere else is she thus represented. The Venus of Paphos did not require a sculptor; an ordinary stone-mason sufficed. "Her image does not bear a human shape; it is a rounded mass, rising like a cone from a broad base to a small circumference." Hers was a primitive and humane worship. It was "forbidden to pour blood on the altar. The place of sacrifice was served only with prayers and pure flame; and though it stands in the open air it is never wet with rain." Animals, indeed, were offered, according to the whim of the worshippers; but they were always of "the male sex—and the surest prognostics were seen in the entrails of kids." These bloody rites were evidently of more recent date than the original sacrifices, just as the sanguinary oblations of the Aztecs supplanted the fruit and flower offerings of the original Mexicans.

Two causes for the ignorance or the indolence of Tacitus in this account of the Jews may be surmised. One, a general repugnance to the Hebrew race, that pervaded the Gentile world, and which is manifested by Roman satirists as well as by a sarcastic historian. The other is the arrogance displayed by Romans generally towards their Asiatic subjects, especially to the Syrians and Egyptians, with whom they were wont to confound the followers of Moses. Of each of these races the religious observances were often, though in vain, proscribed by the Roman Government, whether republican or imperial; and the worshippers of Isis, Astarte, and Jehovah were driven from the capital and Italy. In the 'Annals' Tacitus never mentions the Jews without some expression of contempt; and when some thousands of them were sent, in the reign of Tiberius, to

pine or perish in the unwholesome climate of Sardinia —the *Cayenne* of Rome,—he coolly remarks, it was a cheap riddance (*vile damnum*)—a loss of lives not worth consideration.

But when the historian gets clear of the rocks and shallows of rumour and remote events, his strength returns to him; and the poor remnant of his narrative that we have of the Jewish war enables us to measure as well as mourn for the portions we have lost. After a brief sketch of former invasions of Judæa by the Romans, he comes to that final rebellion which ended with the last dispersion of the Jewish people, and the demolition of Jerusalem itself. Cneius Pompeius in 63 A.D. had dismantled the walls of the city, but had left the temple standing. Judæa under its Maccabæan pontiffs had regained much of her early rank among nations, and under Herod, and afterwards under Agrippa, been dignified with the title of a kingdom. On the death of the latter it had become an appanage of the vast province of Syria; still it had not ceased to be a recognised portion of the empire. But the hour was at hand for the complete fulfilment of prophecies delivered long before there was an augur in Rome—of prophecies which seemed to have been accomplished when the Assyrian carried off Israel and Judah to the banks of the Euphrates, and made a heap of ruins the temple of Jehovah and the city of David. But the end was not to be under the first of the four great monarchies, but under the last.

"Peace," says Tacitus, "having been established in Italy, foreign affairs were once more remembered. Our indignation was heightened by the 'circumstance that the Jews alone had not submitted.'" Vespasian in 66

had been sent by Nero to put down the Jewish mutineers, and within the space of two summers had succeeded in making himself master of the entire level country and of all the cities, except Jerusalem. Vespasian was summoned from the camp to a throne, and his son Titus took his place in Judea.

We conclude this chapter with extracts from the 'History.' The English readers who may have looked into the 'Wars of the Jews' by Josephus, will perceive that Tacitus had before him the narrative of a conspicuous actor in the great catastrophe of the Hebrew nation.

"Prodigies had occurred, which this nation, prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice. There had been seen hosts joining battles in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds. The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure. Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers coming from Judæa were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus; but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth. I have heard that the total number of the besieged, of every age and both

sexes, amounted to six hundred thousand. All who were able bore arms, and a number more than proportionate to the population had the courage to do so. Men and women showed equal resolution, and life seemed more terrible than death, if they were to be forced to leave their country."

"The commanding situation of the city had been strengthened by enormous works, which would have been a thorough defence even for level ground. Two hills of great height were fenced in by walls which had been skilfully obliqued or bent inwards, in such a manner that the flank of an assailant was exposed to missiles. The rock terminated in a precipice; the towers were raised to a height of sixty feet, where the hill lent its aid to the fortifications—where the ground fell, to a height of one hundred and twenty. They had a marvellous appearance, and to a distant spectator seemed to be of uniform elevation. Within were other walls surrounding the palace, and, rising to a conspicuous height, the tower Antonia, so called by Herod, in honour of Marcus Antonius.

"The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork. It contained an inexhaustible spring: there were subterranean excavations in the hill, and tanks and cisterns for holding rain-water. The founders of the State had foreseen that frequent wars would result from the singularity of its customs, and so had made every provision against the most protracted siege. After the capture of their city by Pompeius, experience and apprehension had taught them much. Availing them-

selves of the sordid policy of the Claudian era to purchase the right of fortification, they raised in time of peace such walls as were suited for war. Their numbers were increased by a vast rabble collected from the overthrow of the other cities [by Vespasian]. All the most obstinate rebels had escaped into the place, and perpetual seditions were the consequence. There were three generals and as many armies. Simon held the outer and larger circuit of walls. John, also called Bargioras, occupied the middle city; Eleazar had fortified the temple. John and Simon were strong in numbers and equipment, Eleazar in position. There were continual skirmishes, surprises, and incendiary fires, and a vast quantity of corn was burnt. Before long, John sent some emissaries, who, under pretence of sacrificing, slaughtered Eleazar and his partisans, and gained possession of the temple. The city was thus divided between two factions, till, as the Romans approached, war with the foreigner brought about a reconciliation."

"Such was this city and nation; and Titus Cæsar, seeing that the position forbade an assault or any of the more rapid operations of war, determined to proceed by earthworks and covered approaches. The legions had their respective duties assigned to them, and there was a cessation from fighting, till all the inventions used in ancient warfare, or devised by modern ingenuity, for the reduction of cities, were constructed."

We have seen what the pen of Tacitus could do when relating the storming and conflagration of the Capitol in the civil war, and so may imagine how he described the total demolition of a far older and holier temple. While watching in Rome the builders at their work of restoration of the one, and hearing the proclamation in

the Forum of the destruction of the other shrine, he may have said to himself: 'the pride of a barbarous and superstitious people is humbled for ever; but the glory of Jupiter, best and greatest, will always endure. From the fane of the Jews, the gods have departed, but the pontifex and the silent virgin will never cease to climb the Capitoline Hill.' "The destruction," says Dean Merivale, "never to be repaired, of the material temple of the Hebrews, cut the cords which bound the Christian faith to its local habitation, and launched it, under the hand of Providence, on its career of spiritual conquest; while the boasted reputation of the Capitol was a vain attempt to retain hold of the past, to revive the lost or perishing, to reattach to new conditions of thought an outworn creed of antiquity." *

* History of Romans under the Empire, vi. 598.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ORATORS; OR THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF ELOQUENCE.

'The Dialogue on the Orators' is now generally admitted to have been written by Tacitus, although formerly it was ascribed to others—among them to Quintilian or the younger Pliny. The grounds of doubt arose from a fancied dissimilarity in its style to that of the unquestioned works of the historian. But there is nothing in the language of this dialogue that need disentitle it to a place among his writings. On the contrary, it displays several marks of his authorship, as well in the construction of sentences as in a sarcastic turn of mind. The 'Annals' are his latest, the 'Dialogue' is probably his earliest composition. The latter is more diffuse, the former more condensed; and this would naturally be the difference between the style of a young and that of a mature and perhaps aged writer.

The time at which Tacitus was training himself for the bar was one of conflict between those who desired to return to a healthier period of eloquence—and especially to the era of Hortensius and Cicero—and those who clung to modern fashion, maintaining that it was better suited to their more polished age. The Ciceronian manner, the former argued, attained to the highest perfec-

tion of a natural style. They applauded the graceful and often the dignified character of his sentences, the richness of his diction, his art in opening a speech, his felicity in shaping it, and the force or splendour of his perorations. Yet these virtues, it was maintained by the latter, would be accounted tedious by a generation of jurors and hearers less patient than their forefathers were of long sentences and artistically-constructed periods. The champions of the new fashion had some ground for their opinion. Not only are the races of men like leaves on trees, but their tastes also. The pulpit eloquence of Isaac Barrow might perplex rather than edify a modern congregation; the speeches of Chesterfield or Burke would more astonish than persuade a House of Commons at the present day. Sensational speeches were, in the earlier years of Tacitus, as much in vogue as sensational plays and novels are now in Britain. The fashion in style set in great measure by Seneca, and against which Quintilian, while admitting that author's great gifts, so warmly protested, affected the language of the bar as well as that of philosophy or literature. In Nero's time, when this half-prosaic, half-poetic diction reached its height, nothing would go down with those who frequented law courts or lecture-rooms except short, sharp, epigrammatically-turned sentences. Commonplace thoughts, in order to make them appear new, rare, or ingenious, were twisted into innumerable forms, for the construction of which professors of rhetoric drew up rules and supplied examples. The Controversial and Suasorian essays of the oldest of the Senecas, who might have listened to Cicero himself, are a sort of recipe-books for a culinary process of dealing

with eloquence. A better day, however, was at hand. Tacitus marks as the period of the greatest sensual excesses in Rome that which separates the battle of Actium from the accession of Nerva; and he speaks of Vespasian's reign as the beginning of an epoch of improvement in morals and of amended taste in literature. The 'Dialogue on the Orators,' composed, if not made public, in the fifth year of that emperor's reign, displays the leading features of the controversy between the reformers and the corrupters of the Latin language. The advocates of a simpler and less artificial manner did not gain a complete victory, nor their opponents suffer an entire defeat. Even Quintilian, who, as he himself tells us, was the first to uplift his voice against a depraved fashion in writing and speaking, does not recommend a complete return to the theory or practice of the Ciceronian time. And he judged wisely and well. No sensible critic of the present moment would advise a recurrence to the language of Bacon or Addison. In his own writings Quintilian obeyed the laws which he prescribed to his pupils and readers. But although he set the example of a better form, he could not rekindle the spirit and passionate heat of the Catilinarian and Philippic orations. Some of the vices of the Neronian period were abandoned; yet even Tacitus himself is not quite free from the blemish of epigrammatic sentences, while in the verse of the time the reaction was even less complete.

Besides its proper subject, the decline and the possible revival of Roman oratory, the 'Dialogue' contains much information on literature generally. This will appear from a short sketch of its plot and *dramatis personæ*. Like many of Cicero's treatises on oratory

and philosophy, it professes to be a reminiscence of a conversation heard by the author himself, and reported by him afterwards to a friend. "You have often inquired of me, my good friend Justus Fabius," says Tacitus, "how and whence it comes that, while former times display a series of orators conspicuous for ability and their renown, the present age, devoid of them, and without any claim to the praise of eloquence, has scarcely retained even the name of an orator. By that appellation we understand only men of a bygone time; whereas in these days eloquent men are entitled speakers, pleaders, advocates, patrons; in short, everything else except—orators."

The dispute, like so many controversies, polemical or political, before and since, began upon a question not very nearly related to it. Caius Curiatius Maternus, a promising young barrister, was giving much anxiety to his friend Marcus Aper, a pleader then in high repute, by his passion for writing plays and by his neglect of the weightier matters of the law. In the first place, Maternus could not serve two masters. If he went on at his present rate in such unprofitable studies, he must lose many good clients. "Your friends," said Aper to him, "expect your patronage; the colonies invoke your aid; and municipal cities call for you in the courts. Such practice as you could command would soon make you rich. Think, I beseech you, what pretty pickings Eprius Marcellus and Vibius Crispus have already made by their profession, and no one knows who their fathers were; though everybody is aware that they were as poor as rats a few years ago. But neglect of your business is not the worst of it. Those blessed tragedies of yours will, by

Hercules! get you into a serious scrape. Yesterday you read to an audience your last tragedy, 'Cato.' You must have heard already, for all the town is talking of it, that this piece is not relished in high quarters. Folks are saying that you have thought much more of your hero than of yourself. Him, a grumbling old commonwealth man, you have drawn in the brightest colours. And what is Cato to you, or you to Cato, that you should run the risk of being sent on his account into exile, to starve on some barren island?"

Aper was accompanied on this visit by another ornament of the Forum, and a common friend of Maternus and himself—Julius Secundus, an orator, of whom Quintilian entertained great expectations. They were not fulfilled, for Julius died young. The remonstrances of Aper were heard with equanimity by Maternus. "I was quite prepared for this," he says; "to differ on this subject is grown familiar to us both. You wage incessant war against poetry: I consider it a client whom I am bound to defend. But it happens, luckily, that on this occasion a competent arbiter of our standing feud is present. Our friend Secundus, after hearing what we have each to say, will either enjoin me to give up writing verses, or, as I hope, will encourage me to abandon a profession I am weary of, and to pursue one in which I delight." Secundus doubts whether Aper will accept him as an umpire. "To tell you the truth," he says, "though I cannot myself make verses, I feel a partiality for those who can, especially for that excellent man and no less excellent poet, Saleius Bassus."

"Hang Saleius Bassus," retorts Aper, "and all his generation! Let him and all of his sort spin verses

as they list without interruption. *His* is not a case in point. He could not make tenpence a-day at the bar. But Maternus is something more and far better than a verse-monger. Why should he waste precious hours on his 'Cato' or 'Thyestes,' his 'Agamemnon' or 'Domitius?'—he who is formed by nature to reach the heights of manly eloquence. As for your Saleius Bassus, it was very kind in Vespasian to give him lately fifty pounds; nay, the more so because our Cæsar is not usually so free of his money. But why should you, Maternus, who can earn thrice that sum when the courts are sitting, desire to put yourself on a level with an imperial pensioner? At the best, poets are very slenderly paid." And Aper then goes on pointing out the privations and difficulties of the worshippers of the Muses, much in the strain of Johnson's lines:—

> "Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
> And pause awhile from letters to be wise;
> There mark what ills the scholar's life assail—
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail."

The vehement attack on poets by Aper is rebutted with great energy by Maternus; but their combat is but a skirmish preparatory to the main battle that follows, on the comparative merits of the old and the new schools of oratory. And now a fourth speaker is introduced in the 'Dialogue'—Vipstanus Messala, a soldier, and a pleader of great reputation, to whom Tacitus in his 'History' pays this singular tribute, that he was the only man of note who went over from Vitellius to Vespasian from honest motives. It is now seen that the 'Dialogue on Oratory' is constructed on

the plan often adopted by Cicero in similar treatises. In the first place, the subject of the conversation is said to have been heard in his youth by the author of it—and in that respect Cicero follows the example set him by Plato; next, there is a little preliminary discussion that soon branches out into the main argument; thirdly, a friend joins the company after the debate has made some progress; and lastly, Aper in Tacitus, and Antonius in Cicero, are nearly counterparts of each other in the character of their eloquence. It was said of Aper at the time that he owed his fame, not to art or literature, but to the natural powers of a vigorous understanding; and Antonius is made to say that "his fame would be the greater if he were regarded as a man wholly illiterate and void of education." In the chapter on his 'Life,' it was only possible to conjecture what was the training of Tacitus at the bar; but the dialogue now under examination may help us to perceive that he was a student of the oratorical works of the Ciceronian age, while his 'Annals' afford many tokens of his having been well versed in the poetry of Virgil, and perhaps also in that of many other writers of the Augustan period, Livy included.

"English Readers" cannot be expected to take any lively interest in the respective merits of the old or new Roman orators. But they may not object to a brief sketch of what was thought to constitute a liberal education in Tacitus's day. The future historian may often be traced in the opinions of the juvenile author of this 'Dialogue.' His allusions to the bygone time are frequently a covert satire on the age in which he wrote. Some of the following extracts will show that even if Juvenal and Tacitus never met each other

amid the vast population of Rome—where the one probably rented a fifth-story chamber, and the other a well-appointed house—yet that their views of the general corruption of literature, as well as of morals, coincided as closely as if they had sat at the same table, or exchanged opinions in a library or a lecture-room.

Messala takes the side of the older orators against Aper, the advocate of the new eloquence. He says: "Before entering on the subject of the decay of eloquence, it will not be useless to look back to the system of education that prevailed in former times, and to the strict discipline of our ancestors, in a point of so much moment as the formation of youth. In the times to which I now refer, the son of every family was the legitimate offspring of a virtuous mother." This not very charitable, yet perhaps not untrue, statement, is in the very spirit of Juvenal and Martial, who "knew the town" as well as the Higgins of Pope did. "The infant, as soon as born, was not consigned to the mean dwelling of a hireling nurse, but was reared and cherished in the bosom of a tender parent. To regulate all household affairs and attend to her children was, at that time, the highest commendation of women. Some kinswoman of mature years, and distinguished by the purity of her life, was chosen for the guardian of the child. In her presence no indecent word or act was permitted. To her was intrusted the direction of the studies of her charge; nay more, his sports and recreations also, so that all might be conducted with modesty and respect for virtue. The tendency of this strict discipline was, that the nature of the young being trained up in purity and honesty, and not being

warped by evil desires, they with their whole heart embraced sound instruction, and were fitted for their future calling, whether their inclination led them to a military career, to the knowledge of law, or the pursuits of eloquence."

"Whereas, nowadays," Messala continues, "an infant, as soon as it is born, is handed over to some paltry Greek maid-servant, who has for her assistants one or more of the most rascally of the slaves, utterly unfit for any grave business. By their idle tales and blunders the tender and uninstructed minds of the children are stained, and not a soul in the house cares what he does or says before his young master. Nay, the parents themselves do not accustom them to honesty or modesty, but make them familiar with ribaldry and chattering, so that in time they grow shameless and void of respect for themselves or others. Vices that may be said to be proper and peculiar to this city, it seems to me, they catch before their birth—such as a passion for stage-plays, gladiators, and horse-races. What room for honest pursuits is left for minds so occupied, or rather blockaded?"

This was a worshipful system of education to begin with, and it did not improve with the removal of the children from the nursery to school. No pains were taken to cultivate taste by reading the best authors; history and every branch of useful knowledge were neglected; even the study of men and manners was ignored. Preceptors were chosen at hap-hazard, and all educational duties supposed to be fulfilled, provided only there was a decent form of instruction, in which the tutor was often incompetent to give, and the pupil reluctant to gain, any useful knowledge. After such a

scholastic programme as this, we are prepared for Messala's saying—"It is notorious that eloquence, with the rest of the polite arts, has lost its former lustre, yet these evil effects are not owing to a dearth of men or decay of ability. The true causes of this decadence are the apathy of parents, the ignorance of instructors, the total neglect of sound discipline. The mischief began at Rome, it has overrun Italy, and is now rapidly pervading the provinces."

Messala proceeds to contrast the education of the young orator in his time with that which had prevailed in a better age. He describes the toil, the discipline, the exercises by which the aspirant to public honours was trained for his profession. His home-education had been sound. When arrived at the proper age for higher instruction, he was taken by his father, or some near relative, his guardian, to some eminent orator of the day. He attended his instructor on all occasions. With him he visited the Forum, listened to his pleadings in the courts of justice, noted in his books or his memory his public harangues, marked him when moved by passion, or when calmly stating his case, and admired his art or facility when the subject required a prompt and unstudied reply. Thus on the field of battle he learned the rudiments of rhetorical warfare. Nor did he confine his attention to his patron alone; he watched diligently the methods and the habits of other speakers, and so was the better able to distinguish between excellences and defects, or at least to select the species of eloquence most adapted to his own powers or temperament. This practical education was in strict conformity with the general character of the Roman mind. The greatest of Latin

poets had told his countrymen that to other nations had been granted, in a measure denied to them, the arts of the sculptor and the painter, of the natural philosopher, nay, even of eloquence itself. But the lot assigned by the poet to the Roman people was to govern the human race, to lower the haughty, to spare the humble, to promote and cherish peace; and among the instruments by which their destiny would be accomplished, a liberal eloquence was not the least effective.

The discipline of the orator, indeed, was scarcely less severe in the good old times than that which qualified the soldier for his duties in war. "Military exercises were the important and unremitted object of the discipline of the legions. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained, both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt." * Even Cicero, when at the zenith of his fame, did not permit himself to forego the exercises of his assiduous youth; and the wary Augustus prepared for his speeches to the senate by declamation in his closet. "The orator," proceeds Messala, "was a real combatant matched and mated with an earnest antagonist, not a gladiator in a mock contest, fighting for a prize. His was a struggle for victory, before an audience always changing, yet always 'frequent and full.'" He addressed enemies as well as admirers, and both were severe critics of his merits or defects. In this clash of opinions the true orator flourished. He did not depend on the plaudits of the benches occupied by his friends only, but on the cheers extorted by him from those on which his oppo-

* Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall,' ch. i.

nents, and perhaps his personal or political foes, were seated; and the best of suffrages is reluctant applause.

Messala then goes on to describe the modern system of oratorical training. "Our young men," he says, with palpable indignation, "are taken to the schools of professors, who call themselves rhetoricians, whereas a more fitting name for them would be 'impostors.' Such gentry as now educate our youth were, in better times than ours, silenced by the censors, and ordered, as Cicero tells us, 'to shut up their schools of impudence.' But no such wholesome discipline exists now, and our students are put in charge of oratorical mountebanks." He cannot decide whether the lecture-room itself, the company frequenting it, or the course of instruction employed, were the more prejudicial to the pupils, at least to such of them as have any true vocation for the art and mystery of eloquence. Boy-novices were set to declaim to boys, young men to young men. Ignorant speakers addressed hearers as ignorant as themselves. The very subjects on which they wrangled were useless. "They are of two kinds—persuasive or controversial. The former, supposed to be the easier, is usually assigned to the younger scholars; the latter is reserved for the more advanced. But for the real business of the bar, and for the objects of the advocate, both sorts are equally idle. No judge, deserving the name, would be *persuaded*, no opponent *confuted*, by these windy declamations. The topics chosen for exercise are alike remote from truth or even probability. 'Is it lawful to slay a tyrant? if not, what should be the punishment of the tyrannicide?' 'What rites and ceremonies are proper to be used during a raging pestilence?' 'If married women break their

nuptial vows, or if maidens are wronged, how ought the adulterer or the seducer to be dealt with?' Such is the skimble-scamble stuff with which our budding orators are now crammed! Even in the lecture-room these themes are hackneyed, while in the courts of justice they are never debated. The language in which such frivolous exercises are written is on a par with the emptiness of the questions. It is unnatural, gaudy, bombastic. The superstructure is answerable to the foundation. In such 'schools of impudence' our lads may be taught to chatter, but not to speak either in the senate or at the bar." *

The close of Messala's portion in the 'Dialogue,' and the earlier sections of that of Maternus, are unfortunately lost. He is made to discourse at the end, as he is reported to have done at first, with a fervour that seemed to lift him above himself. He evidently in part agreed with the defender of the moderns, Marcus Aper, and partly with the defender of the ancients, Vipstanus Messala. That we no longer produce such orators as adorned the commonwealth, as well in its decline as in its "most high and palmy

* Juvenal, often the best commentator on his contemporary, Tacitus, notices the depraved fashion of these mock discourses:—

"But Vectius, O that adamantine frame!
Has oped a Rhetoric school of no mean fame,
Where boys, in long succession, rave and storm
At tyranny, through many a crowded form.
The exercise he lately, sitting, read,
Standing, distracts his miserable head,
And every day, and every hour, affords
The self-same subject, in the self-same words," &c.
—Sat. vii. [Gifford].

state," is owing to the character of the times more than to the men living in them. Rarely does a quiet, settled, and uniform government afford an opportunity for eloquence of the highest order. "Great"—that is, passionate "eloquence"—such as pervades the Verrine, Catilinarian, and Philippic speeches of Cicero—"like flame, demands nourishment." Political commotions excite it; and the longer it burns the brighter its light. The spirit of the older speakers was fed by the turbulence of their age. He who could wield to his will a fierce democracy became its idol. Then every grade of society took a deep interest in public events and public men. Then few were content to give a silent vote in the senate, or shrank from the turmoil of the hustings and the Forum. In the conflict of parties, laws were multiplied; and scarcely a bill became law without a fierce opposition to it. The leading chiefs were the favourite demagogues. The magistrates were often engaged entire days in debate; and sometimes it was midnight before the assembly broke up. The people and the senate were generally at war with each other: the nobles themselves were divided by constant factions: even members of the same house were at variance; and no citizen was so revered as to be exempt from impeachment. Hence that flame of eloquence which blazed continually under the republican government; and hence the fuel that kept it alive.

"And remember," continues Maternus, "the position of the orator at that time." His importance and influence were not confined to the senate or the people. Foreign nations courted his friendship. Prætors and proconsuls going out to their provinces, or returning from them, did him homage. He could not stir from

his house without observation and an obsequious crowd following him to the rostrum or the senate-house, or to the city gates if he were going to his country seat. Even if he were not entitled to lictors or fasces at the moment, yet as a private citizen his opinion influenced gowned senators; and his fame was well known even to the inhabitants of garrets and cellars, who picked up the crumbs from rich men's tables, when the sacrifices in the temples did not afford them meat, or the measure of corn supplied by the State was exhausted.

Maternus admits that the forms of proceeding and the rules of practice in his time were more conducive than those observed by the ancients to the purposes of truth and justice. There was then more freedom for the orator. He was not, as he is now, limited to a few hours in the delivery of a speech. If his genius prompted him, he might expatiate on the case in hand; if it suited his convenience, he might adjourn it. Maternus descends to minute particulars, though he thinks it not unlikely that his hearers will smile at them. The Greek or Roman orator was always in some degree an actor also. Hortensius, Cicero's most formidable antagonist, was very particular as to the plaits in his gown and the arrangement of his hair; and Caius Gracchus modulated his voice by a sort of pitch-pipe sounded when he spoke in too high or too low a key by an attendant slave. "But such niceties," says Maternus, "are no longer observed. The very robe now worn at the bar has an air of meanness. It sits close to the person: it renders graceful gestures impossible. Again, the courts of judicature are unfavourable to the speaker in them. Causes are now

heard in small narrow rooms, in which it is not necessary to raise the voice, or to display energy in pleading. Whereas the true orator, like a noble horse, requires liberty and space. Before a few hearers his spirit droops: in a confined room his genius flags."

He winds up his argument with some timely and sound consolation to the men of his time. Oratory may be on the decline; but have we nothing to counterbalance the loss of it? Would we, if the choice were offered to us, return to the days when Rome exhibited one perpetual scene of contention? Could all the eloquence of the Gracchi atone for the laws which they imposed on their country? Did the fame that Cicero won by eloquence compensate him for the tragic end to which his orations against Marcus Antonius brought him? Believe me, my excellent friends, had it been your lot to live under the old republic, you would have been as famous, and perhaps as much harassed by anxiety and envy, as the orators you so much admire; and had it been their lot to live in these piping times of peace, the heroes of the bar would have acquiesced in the tranquillity we enjoy. It may not be easy—it may be impossible—for us to attain a great and splendid reputation as orators; but we can at least be content with the calmer tenor of the present age, and applaud, without envying, our ancestors.

It would be idle to speculate whether Tacitus imaged himself in the characters of Julius Secundus, of Vipstanus Messala, or of Curiatius Maternus. The speeches he ascribes to them respectively display oratorical qualities of a very high order, especially when we remember that the 'Dialogue' is one of his earliest works.

CHAPTER X.

THE HISTORIAN.

THERE was a time when the works of Tacitus were far more familiar to English readers than they are now, —when sages like Bacon, and historians like Clarendon, drew from them moral and political adages, and appealed to them as manuals for statesmen. But in proportion as the power of the Crown in this country has diminished, and that of Parliament increased, the chronicler of ten Cæsars has ceased to be an oracle for our public men. He shares the fate of Cicero—he lives almost in name alone.

Quite otherwise is it with his reputation in Europe, and especially in France. There Tacitus is still reverenced, and often consulted as a guide for statists, historians, and orators. If we except the work of Dean Merivale, the merits of which are so obvious that it would be almost impertinent to praise it in this little volume, it would be difficult to name any treatise on the 'History' or 'Annals' that has been written by an Englishman worth reading: while, on the other hand, it would be tedious to enumerate the French or German writers who, in the present century alone, have either built on the foundations of Tacitus, or thrown new light on his works.

The different tone of the 'History' and 'Annals' has already been hinted at; probably had the reign of Domitian come down to us, it would be found that the later books of the 'History' were a preparation, at least in the spirit pervading them, for the records of the Julian and Claudian Cæsars. That the 'Annals' place the emperors in a most unfavourable light has often been noted. Voltaire, who was by no means a partisan of kings in general, and Napoleon the First, who may have had a fellow-feeling with military despots, have both pointed out the bias of Tacitus, and maintained that in the 'Annals' at least we have a political satire, rather than a fair or trustworthy narrative.

Could we read some of the authors whom Tacitus had before him while engaged on his latest work,—still more, could we peep into some of the family journals of the time—for the upper classes in Rome at all times kept journals of public events or private feuds,—we might very probably obtain a clue to the spirit which guided him in the selection and structure of the 'Annals.' Vanity, or the desire for sympathy from an audience, led the keepers of such journals or memoirs to read them occasionally to a few particular friends, and these friends appear to have been not always discreet, and even occasionally faithless, and so the contents of these private papers got wind, and reached the ears of some vigilant informer, and the journalist had every reason to repent of having been so communicative. "I remember," writes Seneca the rhetorician, "hearing Labienus recite portions of a manuscript which he entitled 'History:' now and then he would pass over many pages of the scroll in his hand, saying, this must not be read until after my

decease." Apparently there was some very treasonable matter in Labienus's 'History,' since he avoided the trouble of being put to death by burying himself alive in the tomb of his ancestors; and his book, after his death, was ordered by the senate to be publicly burnt.

Nor did Tacitus confine his attention to private memoirs. He plumes himself on not excluding tales, resting on common rumour only, from his 'Annals.' Drusus Cæsar, the son of Tiberius, was poisoned by Sejanus, and his partner in guilt, Livia. But there was another version of the story, which Tacitus disbelieved, yet which he cannot refrain from repeating. The story was this: that Sejanus contrived to poison the cup which Drusus was about to present to his father, and warned Tiberius not to drink out of it. Drusus, having no suspicion of the fraud, drained the poisoned chalice, and Tiberius was persuaded that his son committed suicide through dread of being discovered. Tacitus says—"In my account of the death of Drusus, the best and most authentic of historians have been my guides. A report, however, which found credit at the time, and has not yet died out, ought not to be omitted." He admits that "the report cannot stand the test of examination." He gives excellent reasons for disbelieving it. He says, in another portion of the 'Annals,' that Rome was the most credulous and scandalous of cities; and yet he cannot refrain, sceptical as he was, from telling and commenting upon this monstrous story. The true reason peeps out at the last. The story furnished him with an arrow against the Cæsar. "The truth is," he writes, "Sejanus was capable of every species of villainy, however atrocious: the emperor's partiality for him increased the number

of his enemies; and, both the sovereign and the favorite being objects of public detestation, malignity itself could coin no tale so black, and even improbable, that men were not willing to believe."

The drift of the 'Annals' can hardly be mistaken: it is an elaborate protest against Cæsarianism: it is also, what Pliny's 'Panegyric' was directly, an indirect encomium on Trajan. Nothing is more agreeable to the ears of a new dynasty than a picture of a former one drawn with the darkest colours. A golden age has come: an iron age has passed away.

"Tacitus," observes Dean Merivale, "constructs the history of the empire with reference to a dominant idea in his own mind." It was such an "idea" that, in his writings on the French Revolution, misled and indeed perverted the genius of Burke, and rendered the veteran champion of English liberty the advocate of a corrupt monarchy and a still more corrupt Church. It was a fixed belief with Tacitus that Rome owed all her greatness to a senatorial government, or rather to an oligarchy. In feeling and in theory he was a patrician of the patricians; and consequently he attributed to Cæsarian usurpation the decline and decay of Rome. The battle of Actium was for him the Hegira from which dated the beginning of evil days. Rome, governed by consuls and tribunes chosen by a free people, was virtuous and valiant; governed by despots, she was profligate and faint-hearted. The once noble and patriotic senators were succeeded by a sordid and servile race, who, shrinking like dogs under the huntsman's whip, crouched under their lords in peace, and did not resent humiliation in war. Julius Cæsar had admitted to the benches of the senate, Gauls, Spani-

ards, and Africans: upstart foreigners and enfranchised bondmen, it was said, sat beside men whose forefathers had expelled the Tarquins, and humbled the pride of the Marsian and the Samnite; two-thirds of the conscript fathers might have been puzzled, if asked to produce their pedigree. It was the policy of the last and noblest of dictators to extend the privileges of Roman citizens to the provincials, and to recruit the senate with the best subjects of the empire. But this wise as well as generous scheme was an abomination to the historian.

A very slight acquaintance with the annals of Rome in the last century of the commonwealth is sufficient to dispel the illusion that, as a city, having merely municipal laws and functions, she was great; but as the head of an empire reaching from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from the Grampian mountains to the first cataract of the Nile, mean and inglorious. As for the city, in the good days envied and extolled by the historian, we have Cicero's authority for describing it as a theatre in which "domestic fury and fierce civil strife" were almost annually the performances; and as for the provinces, until they found Cæsars for their protectors, they were the unvarying scene of the most cruel and covetous tyranny that, if we except Asiatic despotisms, ever afflicted the human race. Even the poet Lucan, whose 'Pharsalia' is really an indictment of Cæsar and the Marian party, does not disguise the licentiousness of the era which he and Tacitus profess to lament.

Even from translations English readers may derive very fair conceptions of the Satires of Juvenal and the writings of Tacitus—at all events, so far as to perceive that the poet confirms many opinions on men and manners held by the historian. Living in the same

age, though probably moving in different circles of society, they both bear witness to the general profligacy of life in Rome. But there is a difference in their portraits of it. Tacitus, not concealing the depravity of the upper classes, ascribes it to the evil example set by the emperors. Juvenal, in this respect more impartial, shows us that there was, in many a noble house, a Nero or a Domitian. Keeping ever in view his repugnance to the system of government framed by Augustus, the historian concentrates in the Cæsars themselves the vices that were common to the age. But long before there was an emperor there were imperial vices in Rome. But the profligacy, political or personal, of consuls and senators, had not a Tacitus to brand it, and we are left to infer from other writers the enormities of the commonwealth in its later years. The speeches and letters of Cicero alone supply sufficient evidence that the crimes of the emperors had been at least rehearsed by the nobles of his time: that the vices of the palace had been practised in the halls of conscript fathers. The exaggerations of an orator, however, are allowed for by hearers or readers of his speeches; and how often Cicero fluctuated, as his interest at the moment required, in his judgment of public men, is palpable in his letters. He merely used the common privilege of barristers and political writers in every age, to exhibit his friends in the fairest and his foes in the foulest light. Tacitus is a prosecutor of the Cæsars—those at least who are described in the 'Annals'—quite as much as Marcus Tullius was of Catiline or Antonius. But his accusations and insinuations are rarely called in question: and carried away by the force and beauty of his language, by the

skilful arrangement of his facts, and his enthusiasm for republican virtues, the reader of his works, passive in his hands, often yields implicit evidence to his record of imperial enormities.

Tacitus admits that the affairs of Tiberius, Caius (Caligula), Claudius, and Nero were misrepresented while they survived by *fear*, and after their deaths, by *hatred;* and, as regards Nero, this admission is repeated by Josephus. There is, indeed, reason for believing that the odium in which Tiberius was held, increased as time went on. In spite, however, of this statement, the historian throughout the 'Annals' appears to lean to the detractor's side, and represents the Claudian and Julian Cæsars in the spirit of his own generation; the third, that is, after their respective reigns. In the time both of the Flavian emperors and of Nerva and Trajan, there was a strong reaction against the despotism of the earlier dynasty;—a recoil from the extravagance of the Caian, Claudian, and Neronian period. From the bondage in which the senate was held by the emperors, from the influence of women and freedmen, and the liberty, or more truly the licence, granted to public informers, a writer contemporary with Trajan, and one who had escaped from the caprices of Domitian, naturally looked back on a period of general misrule with aversion on a par with that which the Long Parliament felt for the administration of Charles, Strafford, Buckingham, and Laud, or with that which the statesmen of 1789 felt for the Bastille, the taxes and services of the ancient *régime*, and its feudal and royal abuses. Towards the earlier emperors, perhaps not excluding Augustus, the feelings of Tacitus may be aptly conveyed in the words which

Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Cassius, when denouncing the usurpation of the First Cæsar :—

> "Age, thou art shamed :
> Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods.
> When went there by an age, since the great flood,
> But it was fam'd with more than one man ?
> When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,
> That her wide walks encompassed but one man ?
> Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
> When there is in it but one only man.
> O ! you and I have heard our fathers say,
> There was a Brutus once, that would have brook'd
> The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome,
> As easily as a king."

In the pages of Tacitus there is often a spirit visible akin to that of Dante. The Roman indeed had not the advantage of the Florentine in a sure and certain faith that there was a region of bale reserved for his political enemies, and accordingly could not exhibit Tiberius in a red-hot tomb like Farinata's, nor imprison Nero in a pool of ice, like the Archbishop Ruggieri. But he did all that lay in his power to make both of these emperors infamous for ever, and in the following words of the 'Annals,' points at the secret tortures that await the wicked even on earth. Tiberius had addressed a letter to the senate, in which were the following words (the English reader may be reminded that we have not the letter itself, and so cannot divine the context of these words, which may merely have related to physical sufferings) : "What to write, conscript fathers—in what terms to express myself, or what to refrain from writing—is a matter of such perplexity, that if I knew how to

decide, may the just gods, and the goddesses of vengeance, doom me to die in pangs, worse than those under which I linger every day." "We have here," proceeds the historian, "the features of the inward man. His crimes retaliated upon him with the keenest retribution; so true is the saying of the great philosopher [Socrates], the oracle of ancient wisdom, that if the minds of tyrants were laid open to our view, we should see them gashed and mangled with the whips and stings of horror and remorse. By blows and stripes the flesh is made to quiver, and, in like manner, cruelty and inordinate passions, malice and evil deeds, become internal executioners, and with unceasing torture goad and lacerate the heart. Of this truth Tiberius is a melancholy instance. Neither the imperial dignity, nor the gloom of solitude, nor the rocks of Capreæ, could shield him from himself. He lived on the rack of guilt, and his wounded spirit groaned in agony." Such a passage as this would have harmonised with the gloom of the 'Inferno.' In the opening stanzas of the 'Purgatorio,' Dante records his sense of relief from the regions of sorrow, and return to the light of day:—

> "O'er better waves to speed her rapid course
> The light bark of my genius lifts the sail,
> Well pleased to leave so cruel sea behind,
> And of that second region will I sing."
>
> [Cary's Translation.]

And in the 'Agricola,' we find a corresponding welcome to the advent of Nerva and Trajan: "At length we begin to revive from our lethargy: the Emperor Nerva, in the beginning of this glorious era, has found means to reconcile two things, till now deemed incom-

patible,—civil liberty and the prerogative of the prince: and his successor Trajan continues to heal our wounds, and, by a just and wise administration, to diffuse the blessings of peace and good order through every part of the empire. Hopes are conceived of the constitution by all orders of men, and not conceived only, but rising every hour into confidence and public security."

Perhaps the affinity of his works to modern rather than ancient history may account for their mutilation. Their author strode before his time, and accordingly the men of the time could not relish his productions. Centuries passed by before Tacitus attracted the notice and attained the rank due to him among the great writers of antiquity. Pliny the younger, indeed, and a narrow circle of personal friends, awaited with deep interest, and doubtless, when they were published, crowned with zealous applause, each of his great works. But beyond that circle Tacitus apparently was little known. At the time he was writing nearly all narrative was assuming a biographical form; and hence Suetonius and his followers, the wretched chroniclers of the Cæsars from the death of Trajan to Constantine—the so-called "Augustan historians"—were read eagerly, while Tacitus slumbered on the shelf. His namesake, if not his remote relative, the emperor, directed that copies of all his writings should be made and deposited in every great library of the empire. But the reign of Tacitus, the Cæsar, was too brief for his instructions to be carried out; and indeed the times were too perturbed for literature of the highest order to be much in request. The gravity of the historian's temper, his concise style, his profound thought, were not favourable to the preservation of

his manuscripts in ages when shallow and superficial authors were in vogue; and it is among the ironies of fate that we have nearly complete the works of such epitomists as Florus, Eutropius, and Aurelius Victor, while at least thirty books of the most consummate of Roman chroniclers have fallen a prey to oblivion. A tardy compensation was indeed awarded to Tacitus, but far too late to atone for the injury he received from the negligence or caprice of his own countrymen. Gradually such portions of his writings as we have now were rescued piecemeal from the worms or the damp of their hiding-places; but not until the beginning of the sixteenth century of our era were the first five books of the 'Annals' found in the Abbey of Cernay, in Westphalia, and published for the first time at Rome, in 1515. From that date, with few dissenting voices, the historian has been the object of honour and applause. Bayle pronounced the 'Annals' and 'History' one of the grandest efforts of human intellect. That consummate scholar, Justus Lipsius, was so deeply versed in the books of Tacitus, that he offered to recite any passage with a dagger at his breast to be used against himself on a failure of memory. Politicians and philosophers, from the sixteenth century downwards, have regarded him as an oracle, in practical and speculative wisdom alike. That keen commentator on the foibles and vices of mankind, the essayist Montaigne, speaks of him with unusual enthusiasm; the greatest of Italian historians, Machiavelli, took Tacitus for his model; and the recreation of the great French mathematician D'Alembert, was to read the 'Annals' or the 'History' in those moments when he "let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause."

It is well observed by Heeren that, "of all political characters, Demosthenes is the most sublime and purely tragic with which history is acquainted. When still stirred by the vehement force of his language—when reading his life in Plutarch—when transferring ourselves into his times and situation—we are carried away by a deeper interest than is excited by any hero in epic or tragic poem. What a crowd of emotions must have struggled through his breast amid the interchange of hope and despair for Athenian freedom! How natural was it that the lines of melancholy and of indignation, such as we yet behold in his bust, should have been imprinted on his severe countenance!"

We have no authentic bust of Tacitus. Yet it is not difficult to imagine him to have been, like the great Athenian orator, a man on whose features alternate hope and despair had traced deep lines. Knowing so little of his life, we cannot pronounce him austere. Yet it is evident from the 'Agricola' alone that he was not sanguine in expectation, while there can be no doubt, from the general tenor of his works, that he was sarcastic—a man of whom it might fairly be said,—

"He reads much:
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men:
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything."
—Julius Cæsar, act i.

END OF TACITUS.

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